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5th Meeting
Monday, 26 September 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Address by Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Boris Yeltsin, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Mr. Yeltsin *(interpretation from Russian):* At the very outset I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Amara Essy, on your election to the high post of President of the General Assembly at its current session. I view this as a sign of recognition of your country's authority in the international community.

The United Nations is approaching its fiftieth anniversary, and the entire world has grown older along with it. What is the world like nowadays? Has it become better? Has it become wiser? And, most important, what will the present generation leave behind to its successors?

No State, no people can be indifferent to these questions. Here in the United Nations we must find answers to them. This is particularly important for Russia. We are trying to understand what kind of world we want to live in, and exactly what kind of world we should spare no effort to build.

The new Russia was born in 1991 as a democratic State. Its birth was witnessed by the entire world.

For several years now we have been engaged in a tremendous, and painstaking task, the essence of which is to remove the legacy of totalitarianism and the cold war.

Freedom has come to Russia. The people have obtained fundamental civil rights long denied them. Profound economic reform is in progress in Russia. A free market economy is being put into effect. Thus, each of our new success stories reinforces Russian democracy.

Russia has decisively drawn a final line under the Second World War. Our forces have been withdrawn from Germany, Central Europe and the Baltic States. Of its own accord, and at great effort, Russia has removed any threat to the security of other States.

Furthermore, our country, through its own efforts, has promoted the end of confrontation in Europe, setting up new security structures there, not only for a select number, the chosen but for all. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) should become a powerful driving force in that process.

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We expect there to be more understanding on the part of our partners with regard to the problems of security in Russia. We count on their ability to overcome the old suspicion inherent in a world divided into blocs, suspicion that is now unjustified.

Russia is undergoing changes and regaining its identity, but in every respect it remains a great Power. Russia is ready for equal cooperation within the framework of the international community, which should in turn accept an active, open Russia.

We would like nuclear weapons and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction to cease to exist. Efficient control over the non-proliferation of the technologies for their production is imperative.

Russia needs a world without wars and armed conflicts and without environmental calamities. We favour the development of international economic ties without discrimination. Russia stands for a world capable of combating terrorism, drug-trafficking and other types of international crime.

To make such gigantic changes possible, efforts by all the Members of the United Nations will be required. There is no room for either soloists or supernumeraries.

Naturally, we cannot do without new relations between the two major nuclear Powers. I am convinced that the entire world has a vital stake in the establishment of a strategic partnership between Russia and the United States. I am ready for a serious and fruitful dialogue with President Bill Clinton, who today gave an optimistic forecast of our interaction.

Russia's economic and foreign-policy priorities lie in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the former Republics of the Soviet Union. Russia's ties with them are closer than the traditional relations of good-neighbourliness; we have, rather, an extraordinary blood relationship. In virtually all the CIS countries today there is a growing desire for closer cooperation and a genuine, rather than merely proclaimed, integration. Its foundation will be good will and mutual benefit.

Attempts to use the contradictions between the CIS States for selfish ends are extremely short-sighted. Conflicts in a number of CIS countries threaten not only the security of our State, but also security at the regional and global levels.

We are acutely interested in the active participation of the world community in settling these difficult problems. However, the main peace-keeping burden in the territory of the former Soviet Union sits is being borne by the Russian Federation.

Our efforts have not been fruitless. A solid truce has already been established in Moldova. The peace process in Georgia is developing; hope of stopping the bloodshed in Nagorny Karabakh is already emerging and initial agreements on Tajikistan have also been reached.

Everybody knows how difficult life is for millions of Russians in newly independent States; it is not a time for complacency. Once they were in their own home, but now they are guests - and not always welcome ones.

We cannot remain indifferent to the fate of our countrymen. I an not referring to special rights or privileges. But the people in Russia will not understand if I do not state here and now that the democratic States have to prove through their actions that guaranteeing human rights is indeed the cornerstone of their foreign policy. And in this area neither a selective approach nor double standards are permissible.

Two years ago the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the rights of national minorities. At this session we propose to come to an agreement on the principles of that Declaration being embodied in the legislation of all United Nations Member States.

Russia makes no distinction between settling its problems and the problems of others. That is why we particularly highly value what is done within the United Nations.

The world is now at a crossroads. The tragedy of the struggle of two opposing blocs is finally over. The delicate balance based on power, fear and mutual intimidation has disappeared for ever.

But the world is still not stable. The changes that are taking place entail not only hopes for a better future, but also profound anxieties.

It is not only Russia that is trying to respond to the emerging challenges. To a certain degree, the united Germany, Japan, the United States and other countries of the West face the same problem. The same applies equally to many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The fundamental changes in international relations are accompanied by the emergence of new problems. More and more countries see strengthening the effectiveness of inter-State structures as the solution. At the same time, this does not always prevent an increase in the activity of those who hold separatist and nationalist aspirations.

A veritable floodgate of regional and local conflicts, national, tribal and religious enmity and economic, social and political confrontations has been opened wide. The bleeding wound in Bosnia has not healed. It is a tragic paradox that in the wake of the cold war in Europe hotbeds of war have flared up there anew.

The unprecedented tragedy in Rwanda resounds painfully in the hearts of all people. This has proved to be a defeat for us all.

But let us look around. Are there not other parts of the world where more refined and civilized unlawful actions are being taken against national and cultural minorities? Are their rights and their security not threatened? Have racism and anti-Semitism disappeared? Is there no longer any discrimination against those who are categorized as non-indigenous?

When aggressive nationalism is made into State policy it is a grave danger for all mankind.

These problems are all the more urgent today because the threat of local conflicts has not waned.

Each of these conflicts could cause a veritable avalanche of geopolitical changes all over the world.

The cold war is over, but its material infrastructure - the mountains of arms and the military-industrial complexes of the developed countries - still remain. The spread of nuclear weapons could make them into instruments of terror. Huge amounts of weapons have been dumped onto international markets. Unfortunately, vested interests frequently prevail over the awareness of the danger implicit in this process. In fact, this is nothing but an arms race that has simply been transferred to the developing countries through the market.

The worsening ecological crisis and the proliferation of AIDS (acquired immunodeficiency syndrome) and other dangerous diseases are also realities at the close of this twentieth century.

The lessons of history can be learned only with great difficulty. Obsession with the idea of supremacy is extremely dangerous. The pathological failure to accept something different has time and again resulted in numerous ethnic and religious problems and conflicts. The fear of open political territory wind up once again with a "*cordon sanitaire*" or "iron curtain".

Let us be honest: equality, partnership, mutual benefit and cooperation still remain, to a large extent, words used to cover State egotism. Such a situation indicates an urgent need to develop a solid system of security on the basis of principles and mechanisms of cooperation on the part of everyone, and a need for the reform of international institutions. Such a system should be in keeping with the new conditions that now prevail and should function under the auspices of the United Nations.

As a specific contribution towards the establishment of such a system, I would propose the following measures.

First, we must speed up the negotiations on the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. Russia advocates the signing of this treaty next year, when we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We should also give thought to further steps to limit Russian and American strategic nuclear weapons in order to make it possible eventually to renounce the inherited "balance of terror" based on mutual nuclear deterrence.

Secondly, we must extend non-proliferation measures to cover weapons of mass destruction. Next spring, when the Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons takes place, it is essential to adopt a decision to the effect that the treaty should be open-ended and of unlimited duration. No one has the right to deny this. In this context, we believe that the non-nuclear-weapon States will need to be given additional and more precise security assurances. We propose the holding in the near future of a special meeting of the Security Council, at the Foreign Minister level, to coordinate and adopt a new resolution on so-called "positive" security assurances.

Thirdly, we should launch a multilateral debate on the issues with regard to the regulation of the international traffic in weaponry and military equipment. Moreover, there is an urgent need for all nuclear-weapon States to participate in the process of the control and

limitation of nuclear weapons. We propose that a treaty on nuclear security and strategic stability be elaborated by the five nuclear-weapon States. Such a treaty could provide for cessation of the production of fissionable materials for military purposes, for prohibition of the recycling of fissionable materials for weapons purposes and for further elimination of nuclear weapons and the reduction of their means of delivery.

Fourthly, it would be advisable to open discussions on regional programmes to strengthen peace and security. Regional security systems are being formed even now: I am thinking particularly of the treaty on collective security between the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) of the former Soviet Union. We believe that at the present stage that the United Nations could direct its efforts towards coordinating the process of building up regional security systems.

Finally, the experience of recent years demonstrates that the renunciation of the arms race is a complicated and highly expensive process. Conversion of the military industry gives rise to extremely difficult economic and social problems that have to be dealt with, particularly as they relate to the elimination of chemical and bacteriological weapons. In this context, it is important to pool the efforts of the international community. Such cooperation among States would help to enhance the level of mutual trust. In 1996, it might be possible to hold a conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, on international cooperation in the field of conversion.

Implementation of these measures will enable us to substantially stabilize the situation in the world. However, from the long-term point of view, these measures will not be sufficient.

The former purely military understanding of the concept of "security" has today become obsolete. The range of problems faced by mankind is much wider than it was. The modern definition of security is inseparable from the notion of stable development.

The world is urgently in need of a strategy for the twenty-first century - a strategy of mutual responsibility. The most important points of reference for such a strategy could be defined as follows:

- Stable economic and social development, not only for individual regions and States but, indeed, for the entire planet as a single entity. People themselves must assume the responsibility of carrying out this immense task;

- The renunciation of diktat by the powerful *vis-à-vis* the weak. Any country, whether large or small, should be aware of its responsibility for the maintenance of order based on law and morality;

- The unconditional recognition of human rights, including the rights of national minorities. In view of the great diversity of cultures, traditions and the historical experience of countries and peoples, fundamental human rights are a universal value and we cannot permit them to be devalued;

- Strengthening the ecological security of mankind. The world is now facing a most serious crisis because of the deficit of resources, deterioration of the natural environment, and many other negative trends. Common sense and the instinct for survival tell us to stop exploiting our depleting resources to the detriment of nature, society and mankind. Russia supports the programme on Global education and observation to preserve the environment. Moreover, this programme is entirely consistent with the strategy of shared responsibility. We intend to participate actively in its implementation.

At the same time, I should like to emphasize that only a profound understanding, on the part of each participant in international cooperation, of his or her individual responsibility can engender a common sense of responsibility for the world situation.

To paraphrase a well known expression we could say that the United Nations is a good idea whose time has finally come. I should like in particular to note the great personal contribution of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to the cause of advocating peace and settling regional conflicts.

If the United Nations is to achieve maximum effectiveness in the twenty-first century, it must undergo a well-thought-out reform.

Obviously, changes will be required both at Headquarters and in the functioning of the specialized agencies. Also, it will be impossible to avoid changes in

the Security Council, which should remain sufficiently compact and an effective functioning body. This is especially important because, according to the Charter, the Security Council bears primary responsibility for supporting and maintaining world peace and security.

We have to strike a new balance of law, morality and force in world politics. The United Nations could play a decisive role in these efforts in accordance with the Charter.

Russia stands ready, as provided in Article 43 of the Charter, to enter into an agreement with the Security Council to make available national military contingents for United Nations operations. If a sufficient number of other States follows this lead, then it could be possible to go ahead with the realization of the concept of United Nations stand-by forces.

The Military Staff Committee has already been formally in existence for several decades. According to the Charter its function is "to advise and assist the Security Council on all questions relating to the Security Council's military requirements". Let them finally do just that.

The pertinent task now will be to work out a strategy of peace-keeping, conflict and crisis prevention and, if necessary, operations on peace enforcement.

Through specific actions, Russia has shown support for United Nations efforts aimed at setting up efficient mechanisms of response to humanitarian emergencies. We stand ready to cooperate with all countries anxious to reinforce the capability of the world community to produce a rapid humanitarian response.

Because the problems we are increasingly encountering are multifaceted, they require adequate solutions. The question is not about who should enjoy more rights - the United Nations, the regional structures or States. The future world system can be truly durable only if it is possible to find efficient and effective mechanisms to address problems at all levels - national, regional and global. Sharing responsibility will make it possible for the United Nations to remain flexible and a pragmatic and effective structure and enable it to focus its efforts on the solution of the genuinely key problems faced by mankind.

Russia believes that these are all fundamental issues that have a direct bearing on the fate of the world community. Both the authority of the United Nations and the future of world politics as a whole will depend on the way these issues are dealt with.

People have always sought stability, happiness and prosperity. But history provides evidence of the fact that these goals cannot be achieved with the help of brute force alone. Once again we become acutely aware of this fact now that we are approaching a sacred date for mankind: the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the restoration of peace.

Let us remember with gratitude those who gave their lives for this great victory. Let 1995 become the universal year of commemoration of the victims of the Second World War.

For the sake of those living and those who have not yet been born, we must preserve peace and establish stability on our planet. Mankind should finally feel that it is at home, a home which is both kind and reliable.

Our civilization has always been varied. It is precisely in the variety of cultures, traditions and values that the possibility of development is basically found.

At this time, we have reached a stage when different interests and aspirations of peoples can be achieved only through cooperation among them.

The world community should make every possible effort to ensure that its policies are embodied in the new thinking about the influence of States, national pride and patriotism.

The United Nations is a child of the world. Fifty years ago when the Second World War was in progress, it became abundantly clear that the future of mankind is to be found in the realm of cooperation and tolerance rather than aggression and hatred.

Cooperation and tolerance are prerequisites for the next century.

This is the most important condition for there to be a worthy future for our planet.

This is a unique opportunity that has been given to the human race.

I believe that the United Nations, in fulfilment of its general responsibility, will not allow us to pass it up, and I hope that the great dream of peace to which all peoples

and States aspire to will take its due place in the life of our planet.

The President *(interpretation from French):*. On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Russian Federation for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Colombia.

Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Colombia, His Excellency Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Samper Pizano *(interpretation from Spanish):* It is a great honour for me, as President of Colombia, to speak in the General Assembly, which, as the Organization reaches the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment, remains the principal forum for the discussion of topics of concern to mankind and for the search for peaceful solutions to its distressing problems.

Fifty years ago, when the United Nations system was created, the world hoped that the spectre of war was finally being laid to rest. But lack of understanding between nations, ideological fanaticism and the politics of force led to the world's polarization into two antagonistic blocs. For many years, the cold war put on ice the hopes held at the beginning for developing a world-wide system of coexistence. Such coexistence reappears today when we see a black person at the helm of South Africa; when we see Palestinians and Jews discussing fruit groves in the hills of the Golan; and when we see all Berliners drinking good Colombian coffee on the spot where the wall of infamy once stood.

Before the end of this century, we shall have to strive to resolve peacefully the most important conflict to outlive the cold war: the conflict with the brotherly Republic of Cuba.

We now have the happy opportunity of reviving the spirit of the San Francisco Charter and of reinitiating the deferred task of building a new world system based on solidarity, respect for the self-determination of peoples and the real search for better living conditions for all - as was stated a few years ago before the General Assembly, by a distinguished Colombian, Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, in his capacity as its President.

The history of the 1990s must not be one more record of the frustration of our aspirations to peace, well-being and justice. Our objective can be nothing less than the human person. Our actions must be directed towards the struggle against poverty and for the attainment of social justice. Our commitment is to make the arbitrary use of power and abuses of human rights things of the past.

But this task - this vital task - is not free of threats. Neoprotectionism threatens the free-trade prospects of developing countries. It is true that tariff protectionism has come to an end, but a new and dangerous form of protectionism is now emerging: non-tariff protectionism: barriers to the export of plants and vegetables, customs barriers, quotas, anti-dumping clauses, social clauses, the rationale of "reasons of State", and fears of losing elections. We developing countries are no longer struggling against the barbed wire of hostile tariff barriers: we are struggling against an army of invisible enemies moved by the most diverse interests and systematically opposed to the rhetorical aspiration to free trade - an aspiration that would seem to have something in common with our feelings about paradise: we all want to get there, but not quite yet.

Impoverishment is another threat. Granted, we are all committed to the openness of our economies, but that must not mean that we can ignore the need to manage the obvious social costs. Unemployment, the postponement of social investment programmes and neglect of the living conditions of the rural population can ultimately delegitimize in vast regions of the world - this, at least, is true of Latin America - the efforts made over many years to democratize our political systems. The only thing more serious than poverty is impoverishment, and it is beginning to make itself felt in many parts of the world. Either we leaders renew our commitment to the people or the social costs of economic change will in the end destroy our achievements in political consolidation.

Finally, there is the threat of the formation of blocs. The development of economic blocs runs counter to the idea of a world based on the democratic rules of free trade for all on an equal footing. What is at stake today is not the exchange of goods and services but rather the exchange of the means necessary to produce those goods and services.

Selective appropriation of the means of production puts those of us in the developing countries in the worst of worlds. We do not have the means of production nor do we have fair access to them, but we do have the arduous responsibility of competing on an equal footing with the world's most industrialized countries.

It is not a matter of repeating the third-world litany of complaints and demands. The point here is to define new rules that can enable us to gain access to technology and to finance our infrastructures on favourable terms, that can enable us to reach acceptable levels of competitiveness, that can enable us to break with dependency on the cartels of service companies and to buy market outlets in a world where what counts and what is important is not producing, but selling.

That aspiration to develop new conditions that can enable us to play a vital role within the new spectrum of world forces must take the shape of a new development model for our countries, an alternative model which I should like to discuss with you this afternoon in this Hall.

I am speaking of an alternative model that will be an alternative to the protectionist system of the 1960s, for the globalization of the economy requires not only open and competitive economies but an alternative to the neoliberalism that irresponsibly leaves it to the market to correct all imbalances.

I am speaking of an alternative to the old assistance populism, for there must be social change based on economic criteria, and for an alternative to fierce capitalism, which sets up the rule of every man for himself as a form of social selectionism.

I am speaking of an alternative to the blind criteria of public interventionism as well as an alternative to attempts to sell out the State to the highest self-interested bidders, to the Government abandoning its own responsibilities with regard to the unprotected masses.

I am speaking of an alternative to anachronistic concepts of representative democracy but also of an alternative for meeting attempts to reduce the free play of democracy to sterile confrontation between private interests.

The objective of this alternative model, the model of the South, should be the establishment of a new and more productive citizen in the economy, a citizen who participates to a greater degree in politics and who is more supportive in the social sphere.

Words and phrases like "social investment", "good government", "agricultural development", "competitiveness", "harmonization" and "gradualness" are all part of a new alternative vocabulary that will enable us to speak the language of a new identity, of our own identity as countries seeking our own way.

The new model of development, if it is to be genuine and not simply an abstraction, must take into account some basic elements.

First, it must allow for the modernization of our productive structures. We gain nothing if we continue to open markets when we have nothing to sell, because we produce nothing or very little.

Modernization goes hand in hand with the development of an adequate infrastructure of transportation and communications and the optimum use of energy sources.

We must develop new conditions of productivity, especially in the field of technology, and adopt more efficient and environmentally sustainable production processes. The world today is not divided between the haves and the have-nots but, rather, between those who know and those who do not, and we, the developing countries, are among those who lack knowledge. We must buy, develop and assimilate new technologies.

Secondly, there is the concept of social solidarity. Our greatest challenge in this sphere is to give legitimacy to a new economic system through real social-development proposals. Investing in the human being is the best business. Investment in health, education and housing is highly profitable, not only in social terms but - especially - in economic terms.

Thirdly, in addressing those two great revolutions of competitiveness and solidarity it is necessary to change the ideas of those who today act as agents of the economic process.

What should the role of Government be? Above and beyond the dilemma of privatization or nationalization, the dilemma of whether or not to reduce the size of Government, it is imperative that Government work, and that it do so honestly. Good governance must be our goal in reforming Government.

Good Government means building a new type of Government, one that promotes efficiency. It means the training of technically skilled bureaucracies. It means transparency and the streamlining of administrative procedures in such a way that the roots of corruption are extirpated. It means administrative decentralization and citizen participation, and it means the organizing of civil society on bases other than the old contradictions between capital and labour.

Fourthly, and lastly, we must bear in mind that this process is occurring in the context of the globalization of the world economy and of interindependence among peoples. The principal problems affecting every country today are no longer merely national in nature; they are global, and for that reason they require the coordinated action of all nations.

The new cooperation the international community requires is based on adjusting domestic policies to global objectives within a framework of respect for the sovereignty of States, the principles of international law and domestic legislation. Only if we can attain a new concept of cooperation will we avoid the pitfall of interventionism, which threatens to make its way through the open door of interdependence and globalization. Cooperation, as an alternative to intervention, is the route that can ensure for the community of nations the fulfilment of its aspirations for peace and stability.

I come from Colombia, a country that respects international law and the principles that ensure peaceful coexistence; a country that has placed its faith in Latin American and Caribbean integration; a country with a dynamic Constitution and an economy sound as few others in Latin America; a country that is moving forward thanks to the sacrifices and steadfast labour of its people, creative people avid for progress and imbued with a sense of the magic of life about which García Márques, our Nobel laureate, has written; a country searching for peace because it so loves life.

The times we are now living in are times of crisis, but also of opportunities. In Colombia we have had to learn to live with terrible difficulties, always inspired by the biblical invitation to maintain a vision as a people in order to prevail as a nation.

I know that some here must have asked themselves why I have not referred in this speech to the problem with which my country is everywhere associated: the problem of drug trafficking. I have not done so because in Colombia we believe that we are entitled to be recognized by other, positive factors: those that identify us as an honest, hard-working people that offers respect to friendly countries and expects respect in return.

Of course, we have struggled and will continue to struggle out of conviction, while paying a high price to fight the scourge of mankind that is drug trafficking. But I must confess that we sometimes feel alone in this task. We feel alone when we see the drug consumption rates increase in countries that request our help to defeat a problem whose origins and consequences concern all of us. We feel alone, very much alone, when we see mayors who are avowed chronic drug users elected by popular vote. We feel alone when, after extensive efforts to eradicate illicit crops, the doors are closed to us when it comes to selling exactly those products that we have managed to cultivate, with great effort, as alternative crops.

Therefore, in the midst of this lonely struggle that has left many victims dead in the fields, a struggle of which I count myself a fortunate survivor, what many of us want is for Colombia to be looked at from a different perspective - that it be recognized for the soundness of its economy, that Colombia be taken into account when it comes to investment decisions. We want those present here to get to know the Colombian people - my people. We want visitors to see our country so that many more people the world over will be as much in love with my country as are those of us who were born, who live and who will die in that privileged corner of Latin America - Colombia.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Colombia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ernesto Samper Pizano, President of the Republic of Colombia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Nicaragua.

Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Nicaragua, Her Excellency Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Barrios de Chamorro *(interpretation from Spanish):* I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to occupy the presidential chair of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly of the United Nations on behalf of Africa.

Despite the great difficulties we are experiencing today, we can see encouraging signs for the future. The great progress made during the preparatory work for the World Summit for Social Development and the World Conference on Women gives rise to new hope for the creation of a new international order.

Our countries and our Organization face new challenges that require creative and innovative responses if we are to make progress and avoid the danger of reversing the headway that has been made since the end of the cold war.

When I began my term of office in 1990, I faced the enormous task of rescuing my country from war and restoring faith in democracy to thousands of Nicaraguans. I had a great dream: that we the peoples that had been able to free ourselves from dictatorships of one kind or another could unite and help one another, reconstructing democracy in our countries, and that all of us together could then begin a great march away from totalitarian and authoritarian forms of government towards democracy.

In July my dream became reality when the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Managua, with participants, observers, special guests and international organizations from more than 70 countries from four continents.

In the Managua declaration, representatives to this Second International Conference expressed their conviction that democracy is the only system that allows for a free, firm and steadfast union of nations for peace. We also agreed that the consolidation of democratic processes was a key factor in guaranteeing peace and international security.

The Managua declaration clearly establishes the essential ties between democracy and social and economic development, and between democracy and citizen participation.

It should also be stressed that the Managua Declaration states the following: that the future of the new and restored democracies as well as the future of peace are linked to the international community's response to such matters as external debt, protectionism in developed countries, insufficient concessional funds available for development, poverty, and the impact on low-income groups of economic adjustment processes.

The plan of action approved by the Conference promotes modalities for cooperation that take into account the particular features of the new or restored democracies and the promotion of internal commitments in each country to strengthen democracy. In Nicaragua we have already created a permanent forum for democracy and peace in which wide sectors of the civilian population participate.

On behalf of the new or restored democracies, I would like to take this opportunity to make a request of the United Nations Secretary-General that, in accordance with the established procedures and during this session of the General Assembly, a decision be taken to undertake a study on the ways in which the United Nations could support the efforts of Governments to consolidate new or restored democracies.

I would like to appeal to the countries represented here to give special attention to the difficulties we are now facing during this fragile transition process, as we are attempting to consolidate democracy; we appeal to them to support our efforts and the commitments made in our plan of action.

We cannot allow our dreams and the great sacrifices and suffering of millions of people who struggled for liberty to be in vain.

It is with great sadness that we see the gap between rich and poor countries dangerously increasingly rather than diminishing. According to the United Nations report on human development, more than one billion people in the world are still languishing in abject poverty. In 1960, the richest 20 per cent of the world's population had an income 30 times greater than that of the poorest 20 per cent. By 1990, the gap had deepened: by then the richest 20 per cent had incomes 60 times greater and 20 per cent of humanity receives 80 per cent of the world's income.

As pointed out in this year's report on human development, in places where world trade is entirely free and open, those benefiting are in general the strongest. Developing countries enter the market as unequal partners and end up with unequal rewards.

A large percentage of the new or restored democracies are to be found among the poorest countries. As a consequence, they are excluded from the benefits of development. We must all work together to change this situation.

Today Central America is one of the best examples of the new wave of democracy. Democracy is now established is all of our countries. In less than a year, we have had four free elections in our region that produced new Governments. Respect for civil and political rights has been strengthened; conditions which enable more people to enjoy economic, social and cultural rights have been created and civil power is prevailing over military power. Respect for and protection of human rights is increasing. We are gradually becoming a region of peace, liberty, democracy and development.

Next October, the Central American countries will sign the Alliance for Sustainable Development. This Alliance is a major effort at the political, social, economic and environmental levels to create a new and improved development model which can preserve the resources and way of life of future generations in Central America.

Once again, I would like to thank organizations and countries that have provided continuous and valuable support to Nicaragua and Central America. They have made resources available, and have helped find new and efficient solutions for establishing and consolidating peace while achieving sustainable human development. We are certain that this spirit of cooperation will be manifested once again at the International Conference on Peace and Development in Central America, to be held in Honduras.

Last year, before the General Assembly, I made a detailed presentation on the political and economic situation of my country, and about our real prospects. My country has made great efforts to attain a macroeconomic balance and at the same time establish a firm foundation for sustainable development.

We have made substantial progress in the last four years in improving public finance. We have significantly reduced inflation, re-established relations with foreign-debt holders and multilateral agencies, and implemented structural adjustment reforms.

The success of this difficult programme and the attainment of sustainable development will depend, to a large extent, on our ability to promote production and investment, to increase employment and improve the quality of life for our people, and on the quality of the international support we receive.

In order to consolidate and deepen the democratic process in Nicaragua, this September I approved the law on military organization. This new law clearly establishes that the armed forces are subordinate to civil power. The armed forces have now been transformed into a small, non-partisan, efficient body, appropriate to the transition period in Nicaraguan society.

In compliance with the General Assembly resolution declaring the celebration of this year as the International Year of the Family, we have established a national commission to coordinate the efforts of different government and social agencies to support the family as the main nucleus of society and the main agent for the transmission and development of values such as the common good, equality and mutual respect.

Within the framework of the strengthening of the family, I wish to reiterate once again our commitment to giving the highest priority to the protection and development of children. We made this commitment at the World Summit for Children in September 1990.

Also, taking into account our commitment to respect for, and to the observance of, human rights, my Government will create an office of ombudsman in Nicaragua.

As we approach the next millennium, humanity still faces critical questions that threaten our societies and our development. We cannot, however, deny that substantial

advances are being made to remove the main sources of conflict that linger in various continents.

For this reason we welcome with great satisfaction the signing of the agreements concluded between the Governments of Israel and of Jordan and between Israel and Palestine. This will help to improve security and stability in the Middle East.

At the same time, we welcome the efforts being made to reach a lasting peace in Northern Ireland.

Nicaragua rejoices greatly in the inauguration of the new democratic and non-racist Government in South Africa. This augurs well for a new era of prosperity and peace for the whole population of that brotherly country and for southern Africa.

We support the strengthening of democracy in Mozambique. Thus Nicaraguans will participate in the United Nations mission to observe next October's elections.

It is still necessary to promote new international initiatives in the search for a definitive political solution to the situation in the former Yugoslavia and to the sad events in Rwanda that continue so to shake the world's conscience. This requires wider and stronger mechanisms for humanitarian protection, as well as for regional security.

I should like to make special mention of the crisis in Haiti. Nicaragua welcomes with satisfaction the diplomatic way out and the negotiated solution to the Haitian crisis. All available peaceful means should be used to guarantee reconciliation among the long-suffering people of Haiti, as well as and the re-establishment of constitutional order.

Finally, we believe that, within the new international order, it is necessary for the United Nations to recognize the rights of the Republic of China in Taiwan, within the framework of universal participation and respect for human rights.

I feel sure that the future will not conceal from us the great difficulties that humanity still faces. We must work together, with what we have at hand, to make this world a more dignified place for all of us, regardless of race, creed or political belief, to live in.

Next year we shall celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. We hope that the Security Council, at its summit meeting of Heads of State to be held in New York on that occasion, will adopt some important decisions, particularly with regard to restructuring of the Security Council to provide for equitable geographical representation and an increase in the number of members.

I wish, on behalf of the people of Nicaragua and on behalf of the new or restored democracies that participated in the conference in Managua, to reaffirm our deep commitment to contributing to the development of a world society inspired by progress, liberty, democracy and peace.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Nicaragua for the statement she has just made.

Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, President of the Republic of Nicaragua, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Armando Calderón Sol, President of the Republic of El Salvador

The President *(interpretation from French):* The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Armando Calderón Sol, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of El Salvador, His Excellency Mr. Armando Calderón Sol, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Calderón Sol *(interpretation from Spanish):* I wish, on behalf of the people and the Government of El Salvador, to express sincerest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its current session. It will certainly result in a positive outcome to the international community's efforts to find a solution to the major challenges of today's world. We are certain that your skills and your diplomatic experience will enable us to realize the noble principles and objectives enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

We wish to express our appreciation to the Ambassador of Guyana, Mr. Samuel Insanally, for the dynamic and successful work that he accomplished during his term as President of the Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

It is with particular pleasure that we reiterate our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his work at the head of the Organization, and especially for his efforts to cooperate with and to assist the people and the Government of El Salvador in the process of consolidating peace.

May I begin with a brief personal reference. This is not the first time that I have had the honour of being here at the United Nations. We had the privilege of participating in the difficult and fruitful negotiations that culminated in the New York Accord at midnight on 31 December 1991 which cleared the way for the signing of the Peace Accords in Mexico on 16 January 1992. Later, in May of this year, as President Elect I had the opportunity to reiterate to the Secretary-General our total political will and firm commitment to complying strictly with all the peace agreements before us. Today for the first time I am addressing the General Assembly as President of the Republic of El Salvador, pursuant to the mandate given by the people of El Salvador, and this fills us with satisfaction and pride.

In the field of international policy in recent years with the profound changes that have taken place in Eastern Europe and the end of East-West confrontation we are beginning to structure a new international order which has not yet been consolidated. None the less, new trends have taken shape at the global level in the political, economic and social spheres permitting great progress to take place which, in spite of the grave problems that persist, allow us to look to the future of mankind with optimism.

With the end of the cold war the concept of security ceased to rest primarily on the arms build-up, and that has curbed the rise in military expenditures. Democracy as a political system has been strengthened and continues to expand and gain strength at the world level. The global concept of development has also been closely linked to democracy, peace, respect for human rights, the protection of the environment, development and human security.

In the economic sphere changes have been geared towards the liberalization and globalization of the economy, generating a trend towards privatization which will reduce state interference in the activities of society and will foster the efficient use of resources for the collective benefit.

In the social sphere policies are being geared towards the training of human resources to foster personal fulfilment and combat the marginality in which a large part of the world's population lives. This situation is clearly reflected in the Human Development Report 1994.

We consider it appropriate to make a brief reference to the efforts being made by the world Organization in the quest for solutions and in the establishment of mechanisms to resolve problems of a general nature, creating greater opportunities for integral development which can promote the greater well-being of the human person.

In this respect the following are all events of profound significance and broad scope: the holding of the World Summit for Children, dealing with the rights of the child; the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; the World Conference on Human Rights; the recent World Conference on Population and Development; and the decision to hold in 1995 the Fourth World Conference on Women and the World Summit for Social Development.

We support and are following with interest these international gatherings because the subjects that have been examined in the past and will be examined focus on a profound analysis of the variables and concepts related to human development; their interrelationships; the obstacles in the way of the desired objectives; and the agreement of Governments to meet those objectives in accordance with legislation, domestic programmes and national resources.

We cannot fail to mention the successes won by the United Nations in the search for international peace and security. The dynamic participation in conflict resolution - resolution of conflicts of an internal nature, including those related to the process of decolonization, as well as conflicts of an international nature - constitutes clear evidence of the fact that when States have the political will it is possible to arrive at rational solutions to existing problems.

In this respect we wish to affirm that, with a view to democratic plurality and the principle of universality that inspired the Charter of the United Nations, we reiterate our support for the admission of those emerging

States that accept and comply with the norms of this Organization.

As an example of the successful work of the United Nations it is possible to mention South Africa, which is in the process of consolidating democracy under a multiracial Government; the solution of the conflict in our own country, El Salvador, which for a long time lived the tragedy of armed confrontation; the process of peacemaking in the fraternal Republic of Guatemala and the establishment of the United Nations mission to supervise the process that will restore harmony to the Guatemalan people; the fact that Mozambique is approaching the holding of free elections to choose, democratically, its authorities under the monitoring of the United Nations; the fact that Cambodia is now in a difficult period of transition towards the consolidation of democracy and reconstruction; and, in general, all those cases where the presence of the United Nations through peace-keeping forces means that the work of monitoring, observation and separation is being done to avoid military confrontation.

We note with concern that in spite of the effort made and resources devoted to promoting development at the world level the situation in most countries has not improved in the economic and social spheres and, in particular, in developing countries where extreme poverty, marginality, deficiencies in health services and education, unemployment and inequalities in income are, *inter alia*, the characteristics that prevail.

We believe that the objective of universal peace to achieve a more human world will be possible only if we have the conviction and the political will to establish a new model of development in which the ultimate goal must be the improvement of the living conditions of the human person: a new concept of cooperation, based on the democratization of international relations, without preconditions of any type, but with shared responsibilities for the reduction of poverty, the generation of opportunities, the creation of jobs, social integration and the openness of markets.

We are sincerely pleased by the continued compliance with peace commitments signed by the Government of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the signing of the Washington declaration by Israel and Jordan, which constitute vital advances in the peace process in the Middle East.

We hope that these events will constitute encouragement so that other States that are directly involved and have interests in that region will become fully involved in the peace process that has begun, in order to establish a just, lasting and permanent peace for the benefit of the peoples of the region.

We wish to express our concern at the conflict that has caused so much bloodshed to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and we sincerely hope that a negotiated solution will be found, involving respect for human rights and peaceful coexistence among the different ethnic groups of that important region.

The grave situation in Rwanda is also of concern to us and we hope that the struggle of that people will soon find a solution. We hope that that nation will find solutions to the problems afflicting it and we urge the international community to give its priority attention to that conflict.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, we cannot fail to make reference to the situations in Haiti and Cuba. Our Government welcomes the last-minute solution reached by the United States and the de facto government of Haiti, which made it possible to avoid a major armed intervention that would have greatly harmed the Haitian people. Once more it has been demonstrated that negotiation remains the right way to resolve differences, to ensure peaceful coexistence among peoples and to preserve international peace and security.

In respect to the situation in Cuba, El Salvador considers that it is the responsibility of that country's Government to create the proper conditions so that the Cuban people can freely exercise their individual political and economic rights. None the less, as a contribution towards avoiding the deepening of the economic and social crisis and the increase in tension resulting from immigration, as well as making it viable for Cuba to be reintegrated into the American community of nations, we believe that a frank and open dialogue between the Cuban Government and the countries of the region that are interested in helping resolve differences through political means should be encouraged.

We welcome with interest the Cuban Government's decision to invite the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit the country, as well as the announcement of its adherence to the Treaty the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America.

We would like to mention two important conferences in the Central American regional sphere. As

developing countries, we understand social problems, especially those of us who have experienced armed conflicts, the result, in part, of the lack of social opportunities and appropriate programmes to create them. We know that the dimensions and the scope of sustainable development imply major responsibilities and make it necessary that there be greater solidarity, cooperation and harmonization among the countries of the Central American subregion.

For this reason, next October, in Nicaragua, we will hold a Central American ecological summit in which environment problems and the relationship between environment and development in our countries will be taken up. At the end of that month, we will hold, in Honduras, an international conference on peace and development, at which we will evaluate the progress made and the obstacles remaining in promoting the economic and social development of our peoples. We are also considering the need for the material and financial resources that are indispensable if we are to improve the economic and social conditions of our peoples.

In this connection, we are working to enhance and strengthen our democratic institutions in order to guarantee civil, political, economic and social rights, promoting the creative participation of civil society in the development process. We are committed to promoting human development to meet the basic needs of our population and overcome critical poverty. The efforts are based on a strategy of sustainable development that gives priority to investment in the social sphere.

In the Central American region, our fundamental interest is to raise the standard of living of our peoples in order to consolidate the progress we have made in the fields of democratization and peacemaking. We are confident that the international community, which is united in support of the peacemaking process in Central America, will not fail to attend the conference and give us its support and resolute cooperation so that Central America can be a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development.

Permit me to provide a summary of the specific situation in our own country, El Salvador, to describe the advances, the obstacles and the new challenges on the difficult path towards consolidating peace and democracy. It is important to emphasize that our Government's endeavours are firmly directed towards the implementation of the last stage of the agreements aimed at definitely consolidating peace, national reconciliation, the strengthening of the democratic model and the reconstruction of our country.

At the same time, we are focusing on resolving the new challenges confronting Salvadorian society in the post-war period, particularly with regard to public safety, the struggle against drug trafficking and organized crime, the eradication of corruption, improving and strengthening the judicial system in order to achieve prompt and complete justice, and full respect for human rights. We are also adopting measures aimed at reducing extreme poverty, improving the education and health systems, improving protection of the individual, protecting the environment and creating new opportunities. All this is being done in order to achieve greater well-being for the Salvadorian people as part of our major objective: achieving social peace.

With regard to implementation of the peace agreements, significant progress has been made this year in the area of public safety. We have given resolute support to the national civil police, and we will continue to do so in order to strengthen its efficiency and effectiveness by providing the necessary resources. We have also deployed the national civil police in all the country's departments, and we need to increase the number of police in order to confront post-war problems of public safety.

In the field of human rights, we are able to point with satisfaction to a considerable improvement in the respect and enjoyment of the fundamental rights and freedoms of Salvadorians. None the less, we must recognize in all honesty that, although some occurrences may be felt to have political underpinnings, most incidents have been linked to common crime. This is a social phenomenon that is on the rise in the post-war period.

In connection with those cases that allegedly have political motivation, we reiterate our Government's political will to support resolutely the strengthening of our national institutions that protect human rights, especially the attorney general for the defence of human rights, in order that, before the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador comes to an end, it will be fully able to play its proper role in this field.

During a recent visit of the independent expert of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, our Government submitted to him a proposal on the needs

and requirements of the various national institutions, in order to improve the way they function in promoting and protecting human rights. We hope that this proposal will be supported by the members of that Commission.

In the field of the administration of justice, we would like to underscore the election, by consensus among the different political forces represented in the legislative assembly, of the new Supreme Court, which is composed of judges who have nothing to do with or answer to any partisan politics, thus ensuring its independence and impartiality.

The implementation of the commitments relating to the transfer of land, for programmes to reintegrate former combatants and for human settlements has not been brought to a standstill, although there have been some delays owing to the lack of documentation and information on the potential beneficiaries, as well as to financial constraints.

I take this opportunity to recall that the international community's offer of assistance in support of the peace agreements gave rise to great expectations in our country. A portion of the assistance has been provided, for which we are very grateful. But some of it has not yet materialized, and this puts the Government in a difficult situation and could cause unnecessary social tension.

The Secretary-General is aware of this situation and in his most recent report (S/1994/1000) to the Security Council on the situation in El Salvador observed that it was imperative that the Government and the international community find ways to finance the deficit of over $80 million as soon as possible, in order to implement certain programmes stemming from the peace agreements and to carry out outstanding commitments. Because of the delays, the Government of the Republic and the FMLN agreed on 19 May 1994 on rescheduling the most important outstanding agreements. This shows that the political will exists to continue and complete the fulfilment of the peace agreements.

In the social sphere, our objective as a Government is to create conditions that provide equal opportunities for all, from the time of conception, to enable everyone to achieve a higher level and quality of life. The strategy of our social programme is simultaneous implementation of short- and long-term programmes, combined with an economic policy that stimulates investment and job-creation. This stems from our conviction that there can be no economic development without social development, and vice versa, going hand in hand with steady progress in the fields of politics, justice and public safety.

Hence, in order to improve the living conditions of the neediest, we are carrying out social-support programmes for human development that include arrangements for rapidly bringing people into productive jobs. These programmes cover training, production incentives, care for mothers, children and the elderly, basic infrastructure, environmental health, recreation and sports.

We know that only long-term programmes can tackle the root causes of poverty. The Government has decided to undertake vast, profound reforms in the areas of health and education, to make them primary sources of investment in sustainable human development and social mobility.

We believe that these reforms, backed by greater budgetary appropriations for health and education, will make it possible drastically to reduce infant mortality, bring quality education to the remotest corners of our country and reduce illiteracy to the minimum by the year 2000.

We are convinced that one cannot speak of health comprehensively without considering the environment; most of the diseases that affect the poorest people are caused by contamination of the soil, aquifers and the air. Our Government is committed to the protection and recovery of the environment, for there can be no sustainable development if we do not protect our natural resources and halt the destruction of our environment.

The Government's social reforms include reform of the social security system; this seeks to create conditions for private participation in order to broaden coverage rapidly, with mechanisms by which individuals can pay into the system. We are improving social security to avert the suffering felt by many workers, who are doomed in their old age to being a burden on their families after a lifetime of work.

Since 1989 El Salvador has been making major changes to free and stabilize the economy, with notable results. Economic growth has been more than 5 per cent for each of the last three years. Inflation will stand at about 10 per cent this year and is estimated to fall into single digits next year. In the external sector, our current international reserves equal more than four months of imports, and the fiscal deficit, despite the

demands imposed by the peace agreements, will be around 2 per cent of the gross domestic product in 1994.

These encouraging results enable us to look to the future with optimism. Our goal as a Government is equitably to transform growth into economic development, maintaining stability and generating trust in the productive sector. Hence, through sound economic policy we are seeking to stimulate domestic savings; here, reforms in the social security system will play a crucial role in the mobilization of resources.

We firmly believe that our country is rapidly becoming an attractive place for foreign investment. An important element in this connection was the adoption of a new labour code, agreed by workers and management and endorsed by the International Labour Organization. This represents fundamental progress.

It is clear, then, that El Salvador enjoys peace and democracy and is engaged in dizzying change. Although the progress has been great, we cannot deny that the road ahead of us is greater still. Progress makes us work even harder to broaden our opportunities and create social well-being.

This is an appropriate time to reiterate to the Secretary-General the gratitude of the Government and the people of El Salvador for the careful attention he has given to consolidating the process of peace in El Salvador. We wish also to express our thanks to the international community, which continues to stand by our side to bolster our democracy and the process of reconciliation of the Salvadorian people.

We can affirm with great satisfaction that our country's peace agreements are being implemented satisfactorily in accordance with the aspirations of the Salvadorian people, and that they can be an example for the solution of other conflicts. The achievement of peace among Salvadorians was the result of the unshakable resolve of our people, the support of the international community and the effective work of the United Nations and the Secretary-General.

In conclusion, we want to express our confidence that by the end of this forty-ninth session of the General Assembly the world's peoples will have found formulas for understanding and cooperation, so that mankind, under the banner of solidarity, will be successful in meeting the great challenges of the coming millennium.

The President *(interpretation from French):* On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Armando Calderón Sol, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, His Excellency Mr. Bjørn Tore Godal.

Mr. Godal (Norway): It is an honour for me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to your high office.

As the United Nations approaches its fiftieth anniversary, its global agenda is more comprehensive than ever before. Norway welcomes this. We need and support an even stronger United Nations role in the peaceful settlement of disputes; preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping; the advocacy of human rights, including women's rights; and humanitarian aid, sustainable development and environmental protection. We wish to see this forty-ninth session of the General Assembly make tangible contributions towards improving the Organization's performance in all these important areas.

As we assemble this year, we can look back on concrete results in several areas following years of strong United Nations involvement. In particular, it is with deep satisfaction that we now welcome the newly elected Government of South Africa to this year's session of the General Assembly. This is a historic moment, both for South Africa and for the United Nations. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the South African people. They have put a painful past behind them and have charted a new course.

Without the strong support of the United Nations, the democratization process in South Africa would undoubtedly have been slower. Norway's political and economic support for the democratic forces dates back to the 1960s and 1970s. We will continue to support the South African people by working with the democratically elected Government. A democratic, prosperous South Africa will have a positive impact on the whole African

continent. Common security and cooperation can now replace front lines and confrontation. We hope that South Africa will be in a position to contribute substantially to conflict-resolution and peace-keeping.

The historic developments in South Africa have been paralleled in the peace process in the Middle East. Two weeks ago we observed the anniversary of the signing by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) of the Declaration of Principles, following talks in Oslo. During the past year the peace process has been further consolidated. It was a source of great satisfaction to us that, one year to the day after the signing, and once again in Oslo, the parties were able to iron out certain differences which had been obstructing the peace process. I would like to compliment both Israel and the PLO on their determination to follow through on the commitments they have made.

However, the commitment of the parties alone is not enough. The international community must shoulder its responsibilities, and I appeal urgently to Member States for contributions, especially to meet the short-term needs of the Palestinian Authority. In our capacity as Chair of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, we shall continue to work both with donor countries and with the parties themselves to ensure that the peace dividend benefits Palestinians in their daily lives.

In our view, the United Nations should take on new responsibilities with respect to channelling economic assistance to the Palestinians, especially to the Palestinian police force. The General Assembly must also address the new relationship that has developed between Israel and the Palestinians. Our deliberations and decisions on Middle East matters must reflect the new reality created by the parties themselves.

In Guatemala the peace process has now reached a turning point. The very active and constructive role played by the United Nations has led to significant advances at the negotiating table this year. Norway, as a member of the Group of Friends, would like to commend the Government of Guatemala, the URNG and the Guatemalan people on the important agreements signed in Puebla and in Oslo. We now urge the parties to keep up the momentum of the negotiating process. Norway will contribute to the human rights verification Mission to Guatemala. It is our hope that this Mission will encourage the parties to resume the peace negotiations without further delay.

In the former Yugoslavia the tragedy continues. Yet another chapter in the endless human suffering caused by the war is unfolding. Thousands of Muslims are being forced to leave their homes in Serb-held territory in north-eastern Bosnia, adding to the countless numbers from all groups that have been displaced during this conflict. Reports tell us of detention, rape and plunder. We appeal to the parties to the conflict to stop this senseless brutality, and we welcome last week's Security Council resolution which strongly condemns this practice. While we continue to press for a political settlement, we must keep up the humanitarian relief efforts for the victims of this meaningless conflict.

A lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be achieved only by political means, not by military force. The Contact Group's proposal has our full support,and the Bosnian Serbs must be persuaded to accept this package deal. The decision made by the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) to sever all political and economic ties with the Bosnian Serbs is a step in the right direction. We welcome the initiative taken by the co-chairmen, Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, to deploy an international mission on the border between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Norway has already contributed personnel and is also involved in the logistics of this operation. Security Council resolution 943 (1994) of 23 September 1994 on sanctions demonstrates, therefore, the resolve of the international community to press for a political settlement.

As we press for negotiated solutions both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, it is also incumbent on the outside world to do nothing that can prolong the conflict or cause it to escalate. The flow of arms into the former Yugoslavia must be halted. The arms embargo must not be lifted now, for this could have unforeseeable consequences and would certainly endanger the UNPROFOR troops and jeopardize humanitarian relief efforts.

Peace-keeping activities constitute the most important tool at the disposal of the United Nations for resolving conflicts and promoting peace. Norway advocates strengthening such functions. As Member States, we must be willing to enable the United Nations to do in the field what we profess to support in the conference rooms. Nearly 1 per cent of the entire Norwegian population has participated in peace-keeping operations.

It is important that the Organization's capability of conducting peace-keeping operations be continuously enhanced. At last year's session of the General Assembly, the Nordic countries presented an initiative to strengthen United Nations command and control capabilities in peace-keeping operations. I feel encouraged by the progress made on various related issues during the last 12 months. However, there is room for further improvement. These matters should be treated with some urgency.

Proper communication between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries is particularly important. While we acknowledge the improvements already made in this respect, we still feel that further progress is needed. I propose that regular consultations and information-sharing be instituted between members of the Security Council, the troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat of the United Nations.

A new role for regional organizations in conflict resolution and securing peace is emerging, not only in Europe but also in other parts of the world. In Europe the European Union is playing an increasingly important role as it develops its political and economic contacts in an all-European context. Nothing could be more worthwhile than transforming Europe, the cradle of two world wars, into a continent with a solid framework of political, economic, social and cultural cooperation across the old divides. Hence, the European Union is shaping the future of Europe in a significant manner - and is indeed also making important contributions in a global perspective. These are two major reasons why Norway is seeking membership in the European Union.

Regional organizations should take on more responsibility for peace-keeping in the future. Nevertheless, we must not confuse the growing need for regional action with the fundamental role of the Security Council as the main guardian of international peace and security.

Nowhere have peace and security been more systematically set aside during the last year than in Africa. The genocide we have witnessed in Rwanda has shocked the entire world, and has brutally reminded us of the horrifying behaviour such conflicts may generate. We are deeply committed to the principle that those charged with crimes against humanity must be brought to trial.

More than ever, Africa needs our support to overcome the prevailing crises. I welcome the increasingly important role played by the Organization of African Unity. Norway stands ready to support regional processes to encourage closer cooperation among African nations with a view to accelerating economic growth and democratization.

Social and economic problems are closely linked to conflict and unrest. A global perspective is needed if solutions are to be found and progress made. No other organization has the potential of the United Nations to provide such a perspective. Development-related economic and social issues must remain high on the United Nations agenda. I therefore welcome the Secretary-General's preliminary report on an Agenda for Development. The five dimensions of development singled out in the report provide a useful framework for thought as well as action. Peace, economic growth, the environment, justice and democracy are indeed the key parameters in our common drive towards a better world for all.

We are now looking forward to the Secretary-General's supplementary report, which we hope will initiate a debate on the appropriate role of the United Nations in global efforts for development, based on the comparative advantages of the Organization.

The International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo will be looked upon as a turning point in the history of population policy as it relates to social development and women's rights. The conclusions will have a wide-ranging impact on democracy-building, educational policies, health-care programmes and the status of women. Both that Conference and next year's World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on the Status of Women represent milestones in the effort to renew our commitment to fulfilling basic human needs.

At the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, we pledged to commit ourselves to fulfilling the challenges of Agenda 21. These include strengthening efforts to change present unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, particularly in the industrialized world. I should like to emphasize the importance of this issue. Norway will continue to promote the efforts of the Commission on Sustainable Development in this respect.

Over the years, the United Nations has taken on an increasingly important role in the field of human rights. For us, this remains a high-priority issue. The close link between democracy, human rights and development has

been brought home to us once again by the tragedy of Haiti. Norway fully supports Security Council resolution 940 (1994) and will contribute to restoring democracy and human rights in the troubled country of Haiti.

The establishment of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights was warmly welcomed by the Norwegian Government. All countries must now cooperate fully with the new High Commissioner. Regrettably, the past year has once again seen unacceptable violations of human rights in many countries, resulting in untold human suffering. We urge all States to ensure that minimum standards for the protection of basic human rights are observed at all times, even during internal conflicts and disturbances.

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. My Government remains deeply concerned by the continued threat voiced against Salman Rushdie and all those associated with his works. We repeat our call to the Iranian authorities to remove this extra-territorial and intolerable threat.

For years disarmament and arms control have been central to our deliberations. Today we are facing new challenges in this field. The need for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear testing is indeed a top priority issue. We expect all nuclear Powers to refrain from testing during the ongoing negotiations. Substantial results should be achieved before the 1995 Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference. This would facilitate the indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty, which is another item of the utmost importance on our arms control agenda.

The increased risk of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, of nuclear and chemical material, associated technology and means of delivery is a major security challenge that we must take steps to eliminate. The recent attempts to conduct an illegal trade in nuclear material are alarming and demand immediate action.

Increasingly, our security is threatened by the enormous deposits of nuclear waste on land and at sea. We must do everything within our power to counter this risk. The Nordic countries and Russia are planning an international conference on nuclear waste management, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In order to deal with these problems, substantial financial and technological resources will be required. To this end, Norway has proposed the establishment of an international action plan for nuclear waste management, matched by an international fund similar to the nuclear safety account in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. We call upon the international community to mobilize the resources necessary to deal effectively with these problems.

Before concluding, I would like to draw attention to a matter of great concern to Norway: the necessity to ensure a rational, responsible exploitation of marine resources. This should indeed be a matter of importance to all countries, whether they are coastal States or landlocked. Norway is deeply concerned by the increasing problem of excessive exploitation of straddling and highly migratory fish stocks through unregulated fishing on the high seas. The effectiveness of conservation measures is thus being eroded, and the recovery of stocks is being halted or even reversed by States claiming free access to such stocks. The situation calls for urgent and effective legally-binding measures to counter the threat to important fish stocks and the coastal communities directly dependent on them. Therefore, the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks will be crucial in this respect. All of us, coastal and fishing States alike, share the responsibility for ensuring that the Conference succeeds in establishing a solid foundation for the long-term conservation and sustainable use of these fish stocks.

In closing, I would like to emphasize the fundamental importance of a sound financial basis for the United Nations to perform its work. It is incumbent on all of us to do what we can in this respect. As we approach next year's anniversary, we owe it to the founders to ensure that the Organization they created - our most important custodian of international peace and global security - is in the possession of the necessary means to discharge all its obligations.

Address by Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania

The President *(interpretation from French)*: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of Romania.

Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of Romania, His Excellency Mr. Ion Iliescu, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Iliescu *(interpretation from French)*: It is my pleasure, Sir, to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We are certain that your experience and your diplomatic skill will lead to a very positive outcome for the work of this session.

May I at the same time convey to the Secretary-General our profound appreciation of his tireless efforts to adapt the United Nations to the increasingly complex requirements of a changing world.

The structure of the international system, at the end of this century, is experiencing radical changes, particularly the end of the post-war bipolarity, the fall of the Iron Curtain and the end of the cold war. Many new peoples have gained their right to self-determination and democratic development, long repressed by totalitarian regimes. Some succeeded in accomplishing this by peaceful means; others have had to go through tragedies and major conflicts, such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the territory of the former Yugoslavia and the Trans-Dnestr, the Caucasus and Central Asia, former territories of the Soviet Union. Today they are all sources of concern to the international community because of their implications for regional and international peace and security.

The revolutions in Central Europe, whose essential purpose was the restoration of freedom and dignity to the people in that part of the world and their return to traditional democratic values, with respect for fundamental human rights and political pluralism, have *inter alia*, made more politically homogeneous a part of the continent long marked by ideological and political barriers and confrontation between opposing military blocs.

Europe is undergoing an apparently contradictory evolution. On the one hand, there is a tendency towards the fragmentation of States and a reaffirmation of the national identities and personalities of the central part of the continent and the former Soviet territories. On the other hand, in the West there is a process of integration which is tending to draw in new European States.

Other continents are also undergoing historically important changes.

The Middle East, thanks to the actions of a number of politicians who were bold enough to take the great responsibility of rising out of the inertia there, and running the risks of peace, has entered a process of historic reconciliation which once seemed impossible.

In Latin America, as well as in Asia and the Pacific, dynamic economic zones have been created, thus destroying false assumptions about the inevitability of underdevelopment in two-thirds of the world.

In Africa, the abolition of the policy of apartheid, the reorganization of the Republic of South Africa on democratic lines and the defeat of reactionary racial concepts open up new prospects for cooperation and development for the entire continent.

The dynamics of the world have changed. This creates many questions for the international community, Governments, politicians and political forces. So far the answers have been few and inadequate. But life does not wait. States and people have concrete needs as well as hopes and ideals. Their natural tendency is to act in order to fulfil them, whether or not there exists an organized international framework for harmonizing divergent interests.

This is where international organizations and the United Nations in particular have a role to play. In the effort to decode and evaluate the significance of the highly dynamic and complex developments in the international political arena, several scenarios have appeared in which these developments are viewed as preludes to a new era of confrontation between civilizations. But freeing international relations from ideology does not and must not necessarily lead to confrontation between civilizations. By definition, confrontation is alien to civilization. Civilization is characterized, rather, by tolerance and open-mindedness. Of course, this does not exclude competition between civilizations, between the values they promote, between their capacities to guarantee the free enjoyment of basic human rights and the development of initiative and the human personality. But to establish the conditions of such coexistence between civilizations a restructuring of international relations is required if an optimal framework for the affirmation and development of each people's individuality, as well as prosperity, are to be ensured. From this perspective, the role of the United Nations is essential.

Next year we will be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War and, at the same time, the establishment of the United Nations. Like other States in the region, Romania, against its will,

was dragged into a conflict that claimed millions of victims and wrought enormous destruction. However, through the determination of all its internal democratic forces - the embodiment of our nation's aspirations - Romania managed to break away from Hitler's war machine and join the coalition of the united nations on 23 August 1944. The great human, material and logistical efforts made by the Romanian people between 23 August 1944 and the final victory of the united nations forces are engraved in the *Golden Book* of our national history. Even though the status of co-belligerent was not granted to Romania, no one has ever contested the strategic value and political importance of these sacrifices.

We support proposals that in 1995 - the year which marks half a century since the end of the war - the international community should concentrate its efforts on building a climate of peace and giving a decisive impetus to the peaceful settlement of conflicts existing in various regions of the world, thus making next year a true international year of peace.

In this framework, we believe that there is a need to rethink the entire machinery and to adapt the structures of the United Nations to contemporary requirements. Indeed, this rethinking process has already started, and this is to be welcomed. The Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" offers excellent material for reflection and action.

In this context, we support the proposals, in our view justified, aimed at reviewing the composition of the Security Council in order to adapt it to today's realities and ensure a better representation of the great geographical regions. In our view, such a limited increase in membership would have to include Germany and Japan among the permanent members of that the Council, taking into account their potential, role and contribution to the activities of the Organization. Certainly, this should not mean the establishment of a "condominium" of the permanent members over the rest of the world. Rather, we see it as a deeper commitment to their responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, which is the main task of the Security Council. In this way, a balance could be achieved between the Council and the General Assembly and the other main bodies within a context of democratic decision-making procedures that would allow all countries to act on a democratic and equal basis in protecting their legitimate interests.

Any rethinking of the structures of the United Nations must take into account the phenomenon of the globalization of international problems, one of the features of today's world. Objective factors of development are increasing the interdependence of States and regions of the world. In one way or another, we are all affected by the tragedies that have unfolded in, for example, the former Yugoslavia, the Trans-Dnestr region, the Caucasus, Rwanda and Haiti. The world economy shows clear trends towards integration on a global scale, a development which affects the interests of all States. The ecological equilibrium of the planet is becoming of vital interest to all regions and summons all States to bear their share of responsibility.

All these phenomena, typical of the late twentieth century, require us to develop an awareness of our planet as a veritable spaceship if our Governments' actions at the international level are to be both effective and convergent. The United Nations system is best placed to encourage and sustain the development of such an awareness.

Today, there is no greater threat to international peace and security and no greater source of tension and conflict among nations than the widening gap between rich and poor States. The corrections already attempted by the international community, including the Decades for Development and various assistance programmes, have not managed to put a halt to these negative trends. This poses a grave threat to the global balance, particularly through the inevitable phenomenon of massive population migration, which is impossible to control, from the underdeveloped areas of the planet to much smaller zones of prosperity in Europe and North America.

It is in mankind's general interest to prevent such a prospect and to preserve its diversity. This can be achieved solely through a determined and enlightened effort on the part of the international community to eradicate underdevelopment and promote the economic growth of the developing countries, thus turning them into the truly equal partners of the developed countries, as is rightly emphasized in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development. The United Nations system is the most appropriate framework for launching on a global scale a partnership for development, the necessity of which is growing more apparent by the day.

Clearly, such a development must first address the needs and aspirations to progress of the developing countries. At the same time, it should coincide with the interests of the developed countries, which are facing many difficulties today - not on the same scale, of

course - by offering them new opportunities to overcome recession and chronic unemployment. The experience of the developed countries themselves demonstrates that economic development inherently leads to an increase in the absorption capacity of national markets and in the degree of economic interaction.

From this viewpoint the European continent is in a position to engage in an experiment that has great relevance for the world economy. Without coordinated action by European States and institutions, the ideological and political barriers characteristic of the period when Europe was divided into opposing military blocs may well be replaced by a new iron curtain, economic in nature, between developed countries and those in transition, because of the gaps between them. Such risks could be eliminated by the ever-growing trend towards integration at the continental level; the construction of a system of economic relations based on equality between the countries of the East and West on the continent, which will help to promote reforms in the Central and Eastern European countries; and the realization of the necessary standards of integration. Those developments could also make a vital contribution to the achievement, in a similar manner, of a partnership for development.

In this connection, international efforts to promote the economic growth of a particular area must not be viewed in terms of competition or rivalry with other areas. Any economic progress in an area that is lagging represents a gain for other areas. In this context, the United Nations system can play a moderating and balancing role in managing, as rationally and effectively as possible, a partnership for development at the global level.

I have referred to some of the major challenges contemporary international developments present to the international community, and to the United Nations in particular, developments with regard to which the latter is particularly called upon to assume the role of organizing cooperation between States to harmonize and safeguard their common interests.

As a democratic State aware of its responsibilities to its people as well as to international peace, security and cooperation, Romania intends to be part of the universal effort to face these challenges. My country's principal contribution to this joint effort consists of consolidating the democratic process and domestic stability. Over the nearly five years since the Revolution of December 1989, the country's face has radically changed. A new Constitution, modern and democratic in nature, has come into force; the totalitarian regime has been abolished and the foundations of a State of law have been laid; the free exercise of fundamental human rights, including the rights of individuals belonging to national minorities, is guaranteed. On that basis, we have created step by step an ever greater degree of domestic stability, which today makes Romania a stabilizing factor in the region. This is an especially remarkable achievement in that it was obtained under difficult international conditions - in particular, the situations of conflict in our immediate neighbourhood and above all the extremely heavy burden which the embargo against Yugoslavia has imposed upon the Romanian economy, with no compensation whatsoever.

To the extent that it can, Romania participates in the efforts of the international community to resolve regional conflicts, primarily those in our own geographical area. We are ready to assume all our responsibilities and make our contribution to peacefully settling those conflicts and ensuring security and calm in a region traumatized by military confrontations and with interests at stake that are not necessarily the same as those of the parties engaged in combat.

In that spirit Romania has fully associated itself with the Partnership for Peace offered by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to the countries of Central Europe and of the former Soviet Union. We believe this new form of interconnection with an institution that constituted a guarantee for the maintenance of peace throughout the European continent will give a better opportunity for peace in Europe and, implicitly, for international peace and security.

Similarly, in a broader context, Romania supports the process of integration at the continental level. It is endeavouring to contribute to this by pursuing a policy of good-neighbourliness and by implementing regional cooperation projects, particularly in the area of Central Europe, the Black Sea and the Danube basin, all of which should accelerate the integration of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe into the structures of the European Union, NATO, the Western European Union and the Council of Europe.

The priority Romania attaches to the European and Euro-Atlantic options, resulting from its history and from geopolitical factors, does not exclude traditional relationships established over the years with countries and areas outside the European continent. On the contrary, as the country's domestic political and social life has

become more stable and as its economy has begun to improve, those relations have been renewed and expanded. They are certainly valuable at the bilateral level, but they are also valuable multilaterally, since they strengthen international confidence and trust and develop a global awareness of the fact that the world is shrinking all the time, in terms of both time and space, and that each State shares responsibility for the tranquillity, peace and prosperity of other States.

The extremely complex situations in various parts of the world and the contradictory currents that exist, with all their attendant risks and uncertainties for overall peace and security, demand a democratic vision of the new international order, which must be built, and abandonment of prejudices in relations between States inherited from the cold-war period. But that is not all. I believe that today we need a vision of the management of international relations in which realism and pragmatism predominate. Unfortunately, the after-effects of ideological outlooks still linger in political thinking, distancing us from reality and inevitably influencing policy making. In certain conditions, this can have extremely serious consequences for States and peoples by marginalizing them or even by isolating them from international cooperation. In the medium and long term, such political decisions can only have harmful consequences for international peace and security.

Because of its vocation and its Charter principles, the United Nations is the ideal forum for determining an approach to international problems free from stereotypes and prejudices. To the extent that the United Nations succeeds, all Member States stand to gain - each individually and the international community as a whole. Romania is prepared to participate in this joint effort to build a world of international peace and cooperation, free from conflicts and prejudices.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of Romania for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ion Iliescu, President of Romania, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Mr. Sinunguruza (Burundi), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 5 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister of Foreign of Affairs of Sri Lanka, His Excellency the Honourable Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Mr. Kadirgamar (Sri Lanka): First, let me offer you, on behalf of the Government and people of Sri Lanka, warm congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. We wish him an eminently successful tenure of that high office.

Sri Lanka would also wish to express its gratitude to Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana for his exceptionally creative conduct of the work of the crucial forty-eighth session. Our good wishes extend also to His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary-General of this Organization, who must contend with increasingly challenging tasks at a time when the United Nations is undergoing major transformation.

In Sri Lanka, the winds of change are blowing. In our country, we stand on the threshold of a new era of tolerance and peace, ending dissension. In August this year, the Peoples' Alliance was voted into office, after 17 years in opposition, in a parliamentary general election that was internationally acclaimed as both free and fair. At this election - Sri Lanka's ninth since independence - the people voted overwhelmingly, reaffirming their faith in parliamentary democracy, in fundamental freedoms and in the rule of law. Of the registered electorate, 76.2 per cent cast their vote, thus maintaining Sri Lanka's long tradition of high political consciousness and model election procedures.

What happened on 16 August in my country was more than the routine exercise of the ballot to change a government. In an election atmosphere in which conflicting views were given full rein, the Sri Lanka voter remained mature, calm and solidly entrenched in our cultural and democratic values. The result of the poll was therefore a victory for moderation, tolerance and unity. In my first speech one month ago in our newly elected Parliament, I, as a representative of the minority Tamil community, made a statement that I shall now repeat here, in this supreme parliament of the peoples of the world:

> "Let it never be said, if it could ever have been said, that the Sinhala people are racists. They are not. They are absolutely not, and I think this election has demonstrated so handsomely that that particular argument can be laid to rest for ever."

Under the leadership of the new Prime Minister, Mrs. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, a peaceful transition of power has been effected, defying the cynical predictions of some. Our nation's rich and diverse cultural heritage, steeped in the great religions of the world and buttressed by a unique foundation of five legal systems, has made this triumph of democratic expression possible.

Sri Lanka's new Government reflects the multi-ethnic, multi-religious fabric of its society. In Parliament, the Government has the support of a number of political parties, including those of the Tamil and Muslim communities. It is, therefore, well poised to bring an end to the conflict in the north-east part of the country through political negotiations, as mandated by the people. Prime Minister Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, in her first address to the nation on assuming office, stated:

> "We extend a hand of friendship to the people of the north-east and hope that their leaders would take it in the same spirit that we have extended it."

The relaxation of the ban on certain essential items going to conflict areas and the reciprocal release of policemen held by the secessionist movement are hopeful signs of peace in our land. The all-island state of emergency has been lifted and reintroduced only in the conflict areas. Our Government will pursue with determination its quest for peace in our land - a just and stable peace, acceptable to all our people - undeterred by any set-backs that might be encountered in pursuit of its goal.

I seek the indulgence of this Assembly for having dwelt on recent developments in my country at some length. I did so because, at a time when in some parts of the world the ugly tide of intolerance is rising, we in Sri Lanka are proud that we have witnessed a vindication of the values of tolerance and principled conduct over the forces of narrow sectarianism and opportunism. Our recent experience might fortify the efforts to banish prejudice and rancour among other peoples elsewhere.

On the international scene, there have been shining examples of prolonged and bitter confrontation being dispelled through dialogue and negotiation. Thus, we welcome wholeheartedly the end of apartheid and the establishment of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa under the inspired, and inspiring, leadership of President Mandela.

We also welcome the positive developments in Palestine subsequent to the recent agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, and between Jordan and Israel, while expressing our concern over those issues that still remain unsettled.

On the other hand, to our deep regret Bosnia and Herzegovina is still mired in bloodshed and violence and the humanitarian crisis in Rwanda has not abated. We reiterate our hope that the intense suffering and dislocation in those countries can be halted through negotiated settlement between the parties concerned and politically disinterested efforts by the international community.

Sri Lanka's strong and positive identification with the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries began in Belgrade in 1961, when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike was Prime Minister. She was Head of Government when Sri Lanka hosted the historic summit of the non-aligned countries in 1976. Our membership of this Movement, then as now, derives from our deep conviction that its principles empower the dispossessed of this world, giving them dignity and hope for justice. The collapse of the bipolarism imposed on the post-Second-World-War international scene is thus no reason for non-alignment to lie passive.

At the Non-Aligned Ministerial Conference in Cairo we were proud to welcome South Africa as the one hundred and tenth member of the Movement. It is significant that this great nation emerging from the long, dark night of apartheid has chosen to adopt the principles of non-alignment. Cynics have predicted that the Movement will sooner or later join the rubble of the Berlin Wall. In our view, the end of the cold war does not negate the rationale of non-alignment. On the contrary, it vindicates the fundamental non-aligned principle that military confrontation can never promote security, stability nor peace among nations. Principles are indestructible: people who believe in them are indomitable.

There seemed a unique opportunity at the end of the cold war for the world to achieve its long pursued objective of general and complete disarmament under effective verification, especially in the crucial area of nuclear weapons. However, competing efforts by some to maintain a monopoly on nuclear weapons and by others to break it frustrate our quest for nuclear disarmament.

Sri Lanka is deeply conscious of the serious responsibility we undertake in presiding over the 1995 on the Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference. It is imperative that our advance towards a nuclear-weapon-free world make substantial progress. To that end, work in the Conference on Disarmament towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty is encouraging, though we must remain vigilant over any attempts to delay the conclusion of the treaty. In other areas of disarmament, Sri Lanka recently ratified the chemical weapons Convention, which we hope will come into force next year.

As we see the end of the nuclear arms race, we do not want to have it replaced by regional arms races, whether to acquire nuclear-weapon capability or to achieve greater sophistication in conventional weapons. The United Nations arms Register is but a step on a long road towards transparency and confidence building, eliminating the arms bazaar, with its links to terrorism, drug trafficking and money-laundering.

Throughout the course of the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, which spanned a decade, Sri Lanka played a constructive and creative role. The pioneering role played by the late Ambassador Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe of Sri Lanka, President of the Law of the Sea Conference and a former President of this Assembly, is part of the history of this unique endeavour.

Sri Lanka has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which has now entered into force, and has signed the Agreement relating to implementation of Part XI of the Convention. This represents our continuing commitment to the creation of a new legal regime of the oceans. Sri Lanka looks forward to participating in the historic inaugural session of the International Sea-Bed Authority in Jamaica.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean, taking into account emerging realities, has developed a fresh basis for a pragmatic, forward-looking approach to peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean area. We call upon the countries concerned, particularly the permanent Members of the Security Council and other major maritime users of the Indian Ocean, to enter into a serious and productive dialogue for a new partnership in the context of the Committee.

As the Law of the Sea Convention enters into force, greater support needs to be extended to regional initiatives, such as the Indian Ocean Marine Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC), promoting cooperation between the developed and developing countries.

As the United Nations approaches its fiftieth anniversary, there is increasing, and more extensive, resort to multilateral action through the Organization. The Security Council is finally playing the role - and sometimes goes beyond the role - originally envisaged for it under the Charter. Yet we must continue to reiterate that foresight and careful assessment are vital in the preparation for any Council intervention, and that such action should be pursued only with the consent and cooperation of the States concerned.

Furthermore, it is important to emphasize that the Security Council acts on behalf of the general membership of the United Nations. Unless its actions are based on the widest possible support, Council decisions will not be universally respected nor be truly effective. In this context, Sri Lanka is of the view that Council membership should be increased to provide for wider representation, including representation of developing countries. Sri Lanka was honoured to co-chair the Working Group on the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly, including the strengthening of the nexus between the Assembly and the Security Council. We believe the approach we have taken to enhance transparency and encourage democratic practices is one which is shared by the vast majority of developing countries. We feel this process should be moved forward.

It was in this context that in 1993 Sri Lanka announced its candidature for the 1996-1997 non-permanent Asian seat in the Security Council, which by practice of orderly rotation is due to the South Asian sub-region.

Sri Lanka is particularly conscious of its identity as a small State, vulnerable to the ebb and flow of international tides, both political and economic. Yet we have not hesitated to take principled stands when we must. Nor will we shirk our responsibility to act in solidarity with other developing countries. We share their problems and concerns.

Sri Lanka is geopolitically and culturally an Asian country. We rejoice over the fact that our continent, after centuries of dependence, is once more resurgent, politically stable and economically vibrant. This has been achieved largely through self-reliance, indigenous entrepreneurship and the Asian value systems. As we

move at the global level to greater interdependence and interaction, Sri Lanka will remain firmly focused on the Asian experience and its Asian context. We will spare no effort to develop and strengthen our ties with our Asian neighbours. An express commitment to pursue the interests we share with the family of Asian nations will be a new, strong thrust in the foreign policy of our Government.

It is in that same spirit that we participated in the launching of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). We are encouraged by the positive developments in SAARC as it journeys into the twenty-first century, propelled by two important trends in the region: democratization and the adoption of market-friendly economic policies. Understanding among the peoples of the region is increasing. Contacts between professional bodies in the region have rapidly gathered momentum.

As a region severely affected by poverty, we in South Asia have already taken steps to share our experiences and work out common approaches including the SAARC commitment to eradicate poverty by the year 2002.

Absolute poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy stalk one fifth of the world's population. We trust that the 1995 World Social Summit and the Agenda for Development will effectively address these issues and mobilize essential resources to back commitments to eradicate poverty, provide employment and promote social cohesion before the end of this century.

Our development experience has taught us the importance of alleviating the poverty of the poorest and of maintaining social equity with economic growth. Sri Lanka's favourable social indicators are the result of a consistent bipartisan commitment over the years to the maintenance of a high level of social expenditure. A number of income-transfer measures are in place. These are indispensable to protection of the vulnerable segments of the population during a period of structural adjustment aimed at accelerating economic growth.

My Prime Minister has made a clear statement on economic policy, in which he indicates the Government's firm resolve to build a strong national economy within a market framework, with the principal engine of growth expected to be the private sector, both domestic and foreign.

We are particularly mindful of the need to pay attention to our youth. In 1995, when we shall celebrate the tenth anniversary of the International Youth Year, it would be timely to focus on the achievements of the decade and on further imperatives to advance the prospects for youth. The former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka took the initiative, at the Commonwealth summit in Cyprus, to focus special attention on youth issues. Subsequently, the non-aligned countries, at the ministerial meeting held in Cairo, supported the proposal to convene, at the highest political level, a special plenary meeting of this Assembly devoted to youth affairs, as part of the fiftieth anniversary celebrations.

I must also stress my Government's commitment to the provision of a transparent system for the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of a truly vital democracy. During our recent election campaign we promised our people that we would, as a matter of the highest priority, take steps to establish where necessary, and strengthen where possible, a legislative framework to promote and protect the full enjoyment of human rights. Within five weeks of assuming office we have prepared, for submission to Parliament, legislation to give effect to the Convention against torture. Before the end of this year, legislation will be introduced for the establishment of a national human rights commission. This commission will have judicial and investigative powers and will be totally independent of the executive.

In addition, I have appointed, from among persons active in work for human rights through independent, non-governmental organizations, six outstanding national experts with international credentials to assist me with their knowledge and views. They serve in an individual capacity and on an honorary basis. Their appointment in no way precludes them from continuing to engage in their public campaigning for human rights, including comment on or criticism of governmental performance in this area. Their appointment is further evidence of my Government's firm commitment to the conduct of open and transparent government.

At the international level, we are of the view that human rights should not become an arena for North-South confrontation and that no country should be singled out for hostile attention on grounds other than genuine concern for the human rights of its citizens. The scrutiny of a country's human-rights record must be guided by principles of impartiality and objectivity. Such scrutiny must be motivated by a spirit of genuine concern, dialogue and cooperation. In this connection, we wish to felicitate the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ambassador Ayala

Lasso, on his efforts to foster a cooperative, rather than a coercive, framework for the promotion of human rights world wide.

Sri Lanka is disappointed that, on the international economic scene, developing countries continue to suffer from inadequate access to trade and technology, from low commodity prices and from excessive debt burdens. Financial flows for development have severely contracted. The economic disparities between the developed and the developing worlds continue to widen.

The Charter of the United Nations rests on two main pillars: the maintenance of international peace and security, and international cooperation for socio-economic development. The United Nations must therefore at all times proceed with equal commitment on both these fronts - politico-security and socio-economic development. Nor must it be forgotten that economic inequalities and underdevelopment are at the root of phenomena such as massive refugee flows and even ethnic and other conflicts.

We reiterate the non-aligned countries' call for renewal of the North-South dialogue on the basis of mutual interests and interdependence. In this era of global transition, the need for a favourable international environment is imperative. Many developing countries are embarking upon structural-adjustment programmes, at considerable cost, yet these policies will be successful only to the extent that there is a genuine commitment to free-trade policies at the international level without extraneous conditionalities.

Today - 26 September - Sri Lanka commemorates the thirty-fifth anniversary of the death of Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka. He was succeeded by Madam Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the world's first woman Prime Minister. Now - thirty-eight years later - their daughter, Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, has become Prime Minister. What is remarkable is that each of them was elected to office by the free vote of the people in keenly fought elections. Each of them succeeded, by wholly democratic means, in unseating a strong Government. In 1956, in this Hall, Prime Minister S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike referred to the unconquered, unconquerable human spirit as the "one golden thread" passing through the "dark fabric of human history". He said:

> "I look upon the United Nations as the one machine available to mankind today through which it can express this unconquerable spirit of man in its efforts to achieve ... peace, friendship and collaboration". (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, 590th meeting, p. 235, para. 41*)

That remains our view of the United Nations today.

We collectively articulate a global social contract between the Governments and the peoples of this world whom we represent. The success of a global social contract rests on how individual States keep the people's faith through good governance, the maintenance of human rights, equity and justice, and the provision of opportunities to enhance the quality of life. In Sri Lanka's national context this involves political pluralism and makes of politics the discharge of a public trust where decision-making is open, transparent and based on the widest possible extent of acceptance. Everyone in public life is accountable for his or her actions. My Prime Minister expressed it in these words:

> "This is a beautiful but difficult dream, which we shall strive to realize."

It is this vision that must concomitantly inspire the conduct of relations between States. Only then will the United Nations truly be "a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations".

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance and Planning of Papua New Guinea, His Excellency the Honourable Chris Haiveta.

Mr. Haiveta (Papua New Guinea): On behalf of my delegation and Government and the people of Papua New Guinea I join previous speakers in warmly congratulating Ambassador Amara Essy of Cote d'Ivoire on his election as the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that he will maintain the high standards set by his predecessors and lead us skilfully through our important deliberations. I pledge my delegation's cooperation in the discharge of the responsibilities of his high office.

At the same time as we welcome Ambassador Essy, my delegation would also like to pay tribute to his predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally of Guyana, who skilfully guided the work of the forty-eighth session.

As consistent opponents of the vile doctrine of *apartheid* and the unjust political system on which it was based, the people and Government of Papua New Guinea take particular pleasure in welcoming the readmission of a new and democratic South Africa to the United Nations. We look forward to strengthening our relations with the Government and people of South Africa in a bilateral as well as a multilateral setting.

With the end of the cold war, we are in a challenging period. Our collective resolve should be for the good of humanity. That calls for increased multilateral diplomacy, especially of the nature espoused in the United Nations Charter.

To that end, my Government values regional cooperation and believes that such efforts would enhance the basis for regional stability and international development cooperation. Papua New Guinea values its membership, of the South Pacific Forum and the Melanesian Spearhead Group, just as it enjoys its association with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a special observer. These regional organizations have forged mutual cooperation between member countries as well as enhancing the atmosphere for international cooperation.

Such cooperation was evident during the recent South Pacific Forum session held in Brisbane, Australia, where six countries - namely Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu - were able to agree to work together towards a common approach on logging and the export of timber. That positive development in a regional context is of definite value to ongoing global endeavours for the environment and sustainable development.

We believe that an increasing number of issues are of global importance and must be addressed on a global basis. In this regard, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados, and the recent World Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, as well as the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing next year, suggest that these issues are extremely important and need concerted international efforts. While there is emerging consensus on these issues, there seems to be a lack of commitment to providing the necessary resources to achieve those objectives.

Is it worth the time and effort expended in adopting visionary resolutions and declarations when the required resources are not there to fulfil the programmes and objectives of these world conferences? In that regard my delegation is particularly anxious to see international support for the Barbados Programme of Action on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

The United Nations initiative on opportunity and participation focuses on the particular need of developing countries in their efforts to maximize the participation of all their citizens in activities aimed at sustainable development and an effective management of resources.

In this regard I welcome the Secretary-General's interim report on this initiative, to be issued under item 92 (j) of the agenda of the forty-ninth session. My Government looks forward to the final report by the panel of distinguished experts, to be issued to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

It is clear that these issues and others require both a national and a collective international approach, particularly those relating to environmental and climatic changes which transcend national boundaries. Agenda 21, adopted at the Rio Earth Summit, provides a good basis for international cooperation and action.

Consistent with the emerging international consensus on major global issues, my Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Sir Julius Chan, has emphasized the need for a global view to be taken of these concerns and for our Government to take effective action nationally as well as regionally in pursuance of our foreign policy.

In taking a global view we must not allow vague generalities to substitute for practical action. Each of us must contribute to resolving global problems where we can be most effective.

We must follow the thrust of recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" and an "Agenda for Development" prepared for our guidance, and we must pursue those goals, starting at home and in our respective regions.

As far as Papua New Guinea's foreign relations are concerned, we are giving renewed attention to the need to work the Pacific in a practical way. In doing so, we are not turning away from mutually beneficial ties that have developed over the years with countries and regional

organizations such as ASEAN, but are trying to consolidate and to continue diversifying our foreign relations in a wider context.

We remain just as emphatically committed to maintaining - and where possible strengthening - Papua New Guinea's long-standing links with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, Europe and elsewhere.

Even as we focus renewed attention on certain countries and objectives, our basic approach to the development of Papua New Guinea's foreign relations remains one of active and selective engagement. Our specific objectives, including our efforts to work the Pacific, will be viewed, and pursued, in a global perspective.

Despite the uncertainties that have arisen and the terrible conflicts that have erupted in various regions, the end of the cold war has, we believe, enabled Members of the United Nations to reconsider security on a comprehensive basis. My Government therefore commends the attention that reports of the Secretary-General and the United Nations Development Programme have given to non-military threats, to security in the widest sense, and to measures to reduce threats to security by other - and more than military - means. In a very real, and particular, sense the end of the cold war enables the United Nations to return to its roots.

We are faced with a historic opportunity to pursue, debate and take actions on issues of human welfare that are central to the purposes of the United Nations.

Eighty-five per cent of the people in my country live in rural communities where the basic needs of food and shelter are secured on a sustainable basis. However, despite the sustainable livelihood of our people, natural disasters can occur, as happened when unexpectedly high floods destroyed houses, damaged crops and disrupted services in much of my home province, Gulf, early this year.

In the past 12 months, various parts of Papua New Guinea have been afflicted by natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, landslides and volcanic activities, which have placed a severe burden on our resources. The sudden volcanic eruptions that caused more than 60,000 people to be evacuated from the town of Rabaul and surrounding areas of East New Britain Province more than one week ago have considerably taxed our resources. The volcanic activity is still continuing.

We appreciate the promptness with which various Governments, particularly those in our region, including Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America, continue to respond when natural disasters occur in small island countries of the region, including my own country.

I take this opportunity to register my Government's appreciation for the positive responses we have received from various Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. We have yet to establish the extent of the damage to property, crops and food gardens due to the continuing volcanic activity. In this regard, my Government would appreciate international assistance in its restoration and rehabilitation programmes in due course.

Regarding the collective international commitment we all undertook at Rio de Janeiro, my Government is in the process of instituting a national sustainable-development strategy. On a subregional level, we have issued a joint declaration on cooperation in the development of natural resources with our fellow members of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Among other things, it provides a framework for exchanges of information on foreign countries that exploit and harvest our natural resources in unsustainable ways and engage in transfer pricing and illegal operations.

We are party to agreements reached at the Brisbane meeting of the South Pacific Forum to cooperate on a wider basis in order to ensure the sustainable development of fisheries and forestry resources. We believe development must be equitable if it is to be sustained.

The ongoing failure to reduce environmental pollution in advanced industrial countries undermines the global commitments made at Rio de Janeiro.

The people and the Government of Papua New Guinea are especially sensitive about the need for balance between equity and development. We are continuing to experience the sad consequences that arose from the lack of proper balance among the immediate needs of people, the environment and development in the area around the Panguna copper mine, in our province of Bougainville.

Allow me to touch on an area of serious concern to my delegation and my Government. This relates to allegations of human rights violations on the island in

Bougainville Province of Papua New Guinea. The allegations of human rights violations have been unduly orchestrated through the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. This, I wish to assure the Assembly, is an ill-conceived attempt to discredit the Government and the people of Papua New Guinea.

From the very beginning of its life as an independent state, in 1975, Papua New Guinea has had embodied in its constitution human rights provisions as entrenched basic and fundamental rights and freedoms of the human person.

These cover all internationally recognized human rights Covenants and more. They include the liberty of the person, freedom from forced labor, freedom from arbitrary search and entry, freedom of conscience, thought and religion, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, the right to freedom of employment, the right to privacy, freedom of information, freedom of movement, and protection from unjust deprivation of property. An honest and objective assessment of the situation in Papua New Guinea should leave no one in doubt as to our good record in the observance of and respect for human rights.

My Government therefore sees no difficulty in meeting the request made by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to provide a report on alleged human rights abuses in Bougainville. Outsiders have been allowed to visit and to report on what they see; Bougainville is neither closed nor shut off from all external contacts.

The Bougainville peace conference is expected to discuss human rights issues, including allegations of abuses. The Government intends to set up a human rights commission to investigate, provide redress for and prevent repetition of human rights violations. We are confident that the report we are providing will deal with all legitimate United Nations concerns.

The situation in Bougainville is not a colonial problem. It is not a problem of human rights as such. It is not a minority or indigenous people's issue. The trouble in Bougainville Province, stemming as it does from claims to compensation for the use of tribal lands in the process of development during a mining project, makes all separatist claims that are being canvassed by some commentators ring very hollow.

Compensation claims are very common in all the provinces of Papua New Guinea, which is a country experiencing a mining and petroleum resources development boom. The ownership of the land in which the mineral resources are located is vested in groups of clans or tribes or other congregations of extended families, and in a very special way their whole being is wrapped up in the land and the environment. Therefore the determination of the legal rights of these groups to the benefits from any mining projects on their land becomes a very complicated and sensitive affair indeed. This is the real basis of the Bougainvilie problem, and it is a problem faced by the Government in just about every province in the country.

A perfectly legitimate resource-benefit dispute between the mining company and the traditional landowners has taken advantage of by criminal elements, whose activities derailed the negotiations for a just solution on compensation for the use of land for the development of the giant Panguna copper mine, which at the time was the biggest foreign-exchange earner for the country.

In a vibrant democracy such as the one we have in Papua New Guinea, we cannot deny our people's fundamental rights. The exercise of their rights determines the Government that will take office. In our continuing effort to find a resolution to the unfortunate situation in Bougainville, my Prime Minister has recently taken an initiative to bring the conflict to a peaceful end. We have accordingly negotiated a cease-fire with all major parties to the crisis.

I am pleased to add that preparations for a Bougainville peace conference, planned to begin on 10 October, are well in hand. A regional peace-keeping force, made up of units from Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu, with Australian and New Zealand logistical support and the cooperation, in particular, of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Government and people of the Solomon Islands, is being formed to facilitate the peace process. I am pleased to say that at this very moment a status-of-forces agreement has been signed in Suva, Fiji, between my Prime Minister and representatives from the participating countries to formalize the arrangements. We believe this peace-keeping operation now being put in place is an example of regional self-help, and an approach worthy of endorsement and wider consideration and application.

While we are attempting to find a peaceful solution to the worst crisis faced by Papua New Guinea since independence, my Government can only express its deep concern at the continuing failure of people with much

older national institutions to do the same, and of Governments elsewhere to act purposefully in their stead.

We are deeply disturbed by the continuing violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the elusive cease-fire process and the paralysis of political will that has so far failed to halt aggression. In the cases of Rwanda, Somalia and other trouble areas, I must say that the horrors being revealed to the world have caused the most profound shock in my country. Can we, the Members of the United Nations, really do no more to end the violence, to reduce the suffering and to bring mass murderers to justice? Can we not act faster? Can we be no more effective? These questions are especially urgent in an age where the complaint has sometimes been made that the United Nations is not balancing its attention and resources properly between peace-keeping and development.

Even as we regret the terrible situations in some parts of the world, we can only be heartened by developments elsewhere. Thus my Government welcomes the constructive steps being taken by the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization to build peace in one of the most troublesome parts of the world. We applaud the skilful, determined and unselfish diplomacy that has facilitated the process and still continues to lend it support.

Elsewhere in the world, developments to bring about a political settlement in Haiti have given my Government cautious hope that diplomacy will continue to be an effective means of securing peace in such a complex situation. The cease-fire in Northern Ireland suggests that all is never completely lost in even the most enduring and seemingly intractable conflicts.

Closer to home, my Government is optimistic about the prospects for securing peace through the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other efforts to enhance confidence-building in South-East Asia.

We urge the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to desist from the development of nuclear weapons.

Firmly committed to maintaining and strengthening relations with the People's Republic of China on the basis of existing agreements, my Government none the less sees the developing dialogue between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan as very promising indeed.

Following the successful World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993, the draft text of the Agenda for Development acknowledges that development is a human right. It also states quite rightly that development is "the most secure basis for peace". But development in an increasingly interdependent world involves more than national will and resources. It requires international support, or at least an international environment that is not actively hostile.

While the world must surely welcome the successful conclusion of the Uruguay round of negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, peoples and Governments in developing countries are entitled to look for more, particularly by way of measures to reduce and ultimately remove completely barriers that obstruct our capacity to compete effectively in international trade.

Successive Papua New Guinea Governments have been active participants in the deliberations of the Special Committee on decolonization. We have been strong advocates of the right to self-determination in New Caledonia and of special safeguards for the indigenous Kanaks. Like other members of the South Pacific Forum, we remain firm in our support of the rights of the Kanaks. Our vigilance in relation to the implementation of the Matignon Accords will be maintained until the ultimate objective is achieved.

With formal termination of the last United Nations Trusteeship mandate, over Palau, later this year, and with the implementation of the Compact of Free Association with the United States of America, my Government looks forward to welcoming Palau to full membership of the United Nations in due course.

In taking a global view from the perspective of the part of the Asia-Pacific region where Papua New Guinea is located, I have tried to relate immediate national and regional issues to wider international concerns. In doing so, I have been aware that other delegations, hearing of events and attitudes in my part of the world, have been placing us in a global perspective too.

In the South Pacific, my Government sees worthwhile prospects for enhancing mutually beneficial cooperation in a number of areas that have not previously received the attention they deserve, including the promotion of trade, investment and tourism, and development of the region's vast natural resources.

Papua New Guinea believes that the ongoing consultations aimed at expanding the number of permanent seats on the Security Council and at the revitalization of the General Assembly are timely. We hope that the process will reflect the current international economic and political climate. Thus, we are pleased to note the progress being made in improving financial controls and in exploring options for further reform within the United Nations system. We hope that both processes will contribute to further development of the Organization's capacity for effective achievement of its objectives.

As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we should all re-commit ourselves to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. An era of cooperation and understanding has dawned. Let us not miss the opportunity for peace, security and prosperity for humanity.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan, His Excellency Mr. Hussain Suliman Abu Salih.

Mr. Abu Salih (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic):* I salute Ambassador Essy and warmly congratulate him on his unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at this session. I express our happiness and that of the sons of Africa on his assumption of that important post. It is our hope that during his term of office Africa and the whole of the international community will achieve the development and the consolidation of peace and security to which our peoples aspire.

I wish also to convey our compliments to Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana on his exemplary and able leadership during his presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

Prince Sisowath (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

I should also like to salute the Secretary-General for his tireless effort as leader of the Organization; we wish him all success.

On this occasion it is my pleasure to welcome the return of the sister Republic of South Africa to the international community as a democratic country, that is now free from apartheid and that is governed by its own national will, to participate effectively in the development of Africa and of the world at large. In welcoming South Africa, I reiterate our continued support for its people, just as we were devoted to their cause during the struggle for the eradication of apartheid.

Indeed, it is the destiny of people committed to the defence of their freedom to have their will tested. That is exactly the fate of the people of Sudan which, since the National Salvation Revolution came to power has decided to have an independent voice in all regional and international forums on all issues and in all fields, inspired by its principles based on its cultural heritage and its regional and international affiliations.

I have the honour of briefing the Assembly on a number of the accomplishments my Government has achieved despite the obstacles it has faced owing to its adherence to the cultural choice of the Sudanese people. The Government of the National Salvation Revolution inherited armed discord in the South, with all its consequences. From the start, it accorded the highest priority to the achievement of a peaceful, negotiated, just and lasting settlement. It is the conviction of my Government that only a permanent solution will be acceptable to the people. During its five years in power, the Government has engaged in a number of peace talks with the rebel movement. These have taken place successively in Addis Ababa, Nairobi and twice in Abuja; recently there have been four rounds of talks in Nairobi. The talks have taken place with the help of neighbours and brethren who share our belief that it is the sons of Africa who can find suitable solutions to Africa's problems. The Government, with earnest determination to ensure the success of the peace talks, proposed a new mechanism to expedite the peace process. This calls for the dispatch of personal envoys of the Presidents of the mediating countries to engage in shuttle diplomacy between the Government and the rebel movement.

My Government, which is anxious to reach a just and lasting solution, not only entered into negotiations, but has also adopted the federal system of government that had long been called for by the southern Sudanese.

It implemented the formula of power sharing and the sharing of wealth in the framework of Federalism. As regards the relationship between religion and State, the Government proposed a formula that would enable the majority to choose whatever suits its cultural heritage, without infringement on the rights of the rest of the population, ultimately bearing in mind the need to respect every citizen's equal rights and the cultural diversity that characterizes the Sudan and of which we are so proud.

That is why the southern Sudan, where the majority is non-Muslim, has been exempted from the application of Islamic law.

Given its conviction that those who joined the ranks of the rebellion and those who happen to live in the rebel-held areas are Sudanese citizens who deserve, and are entitled to enjoy fully all their rights, the Government signed the Operation Life-Line Sudan III Agreement to ensure the delivery of food and medicines to whoever was in need. Officials of the United Nations were candid and sincere when they described Operation Life-Line Sudan as unprecedented world wide. The allegation that the root causes of the war in southern Sudan are religious or ethnic is refuted by the fact that the majority of displaced persons moved northwards and to the national capital, while only a few migrated out of the country.

Citizens of the south who had suffered the ravages of the lengthy war in the south took the initiative of convening the Juba Conference in May 1994. That Conference was also attended by a number of foreign Ambassadors accredited to the Sudan. Those who represented the south at that Conference reiterated the unity of the country and categorically rejected the isolated agenda of the rebels which aims at fragmenting the country.

Nations manifest wisdom when, in quest of national identity and in search for an effective system of Government that best suits their special conditions and historical background, they draw inspiration from their own heritage. Our people have found this in the application of the *shura*, or consultation, as a system of Government to ensure the universality of opinions free from the tribal and sectorial fanaticism that causes disunity amongst the sons of the nation. This principle is exercised without a tyrannical authority that deprives them of their will. The *shura* is the overall vessel for political, developmental and social endeavour. To put the *shura* into practice, the Permanent Electoral Commission was founded in conformity with the electoral law enacted by the Transitional National Assembly, which is composed of neutral personalities of professional integrity. Voter registration was introduced to ensure an atmosphere conducive to fair and genuine elections that are scheduled to take place early next year, after the full participation of all the people is secured.

To enable all strata of the population to participate effectively in administering and organizing themselves, developing their resources and enjoying all their rights, the central power made way for 26 State Governments within the framework of the federal system. This minimization of the administrative authority was aimed at achieving the advancement and welfare of the country through the development of its States.

Our belief that almighty Allah elevated the human race above all other species is our guiding principle in the area of human rights. My Government has translated that belief into action in all areas. In order to ensure the effective enjoyment by all citizens of their human rights, the Government established the Supreme Council for Human Rights and bestowed upon it full constitutional liberty. It secured the freedom of the judiciary and protected it against interference by the political authority. The justice system was reformed to guarantee freedom of litigation, equity and rule of law.

The Government of the National Salvation Revolution strengthened the role of women in the Sudan and upheld all their rights. It enabled women to occupy high constitutional, judicial, political and economic posts, while also upholding their social rights. Today, women represent 50 per cent of the labour force in Government offices, where they perform very ably. Statistics of the Ministry of Education revealed that 60 per cent of the students enrolled in universities and institutions of higher education are female.

The best example of the confidence of the Government in its performance in the area of human rights is the fact that it opened its doors wide for representatives of European Parliaments, including the British House of Commons and House of Lords, the Italian Parliament, and the United States Congress. In addition, human rights organizations, religious associations and other dignitaries have visited the country, especially those areas where abuses of human rights were alleged to have taken place.

As a manifestation of our tolerance, our country is currently hosting the Inter-Religion Dialogue Conference, in which Muslim and Christian scholars from different parts of the world are participating. This Conference is aimed at the enhancement of tolerance and peaceful coexistence between religions in any one geographical area. The purpose is also to prove that religion is not, as alleged by others, mere fanaticism. The Conference is based on the mutual conviction that ethics and morals are the best guides for individuals and peoples. In this regard, I would like to point out that the present Conference is the sequel of a previous one that was

convened in Sudan two years ago, after which interreligion dialogue continued inside and outside the Sudan.

After this brief account, the Assembly may agree with me that reports of violations of human rights in the Sudan are nothing but malicious applications of political pressure to deter the Sudan from exercising its freedom to make its own decision and holding on to its cultural options. I need not state that those who continue to level baseless accusations against Sudan have not produced any evidence whatsoever to support their allegations. This, as I said earlier, seems to be the lot of all nations that choose their own way.

Those who make unfounded allegations that Sudan harbours terrorism have not produced a single shred of evidence to prove it. They never expected that Sudan would prove its innocence by capturing the most dangerous and most wanted terrorist in history: Carlos, the Jackal. Guided by standards of conduct that condemn violence and bloodshed, and in accordance with its adherence to international conventions and ethical ideals, Sudan arrested that terrorist. By virtue of our doctrine of transparency and openness, the doors of our country will remain wide open for whoever wishes to see for himself that no terrorism is harboured in the Sudan.

The rebel movement, which was hatched outside Sudan, has kept changing its skin, with different programmes and ideologies, in order to gain support. Unfortunately, up to now the rebellion has received moral, material and military support from those who do not want the Sudan to enjoy its freedom of decision. The rebellion thus became a pliant tool in the futile attempts to subjugate the Sudan. The rebel leaders made themselves warlords, indifferent to the plight of their own people and the blood they continue to shed. Before the eyes of international community, the rebels commit the worst and atrocious kinds of violation of human rights: attacking and commandeering relief barges and trains, killing relief workers, looting villages and abducting men and children. Leaders of the rebellion are now launching a repugnant liquidation of their opponents in the ranks of the rebel movement. As proof of its defeat, very large numbers of returnees from the rebel movement came back home, convinced that it lacked a proper objective and that it had fallen prey to the influence of foreign powers.

The crime of our time was that which was committed in the Kakuma Refugee Camp in Northern Kenya, which accommodates children who are Sudanese refugees. The Garang faction kidnapped 5,000 children at gunpoint to join their ranks, undeterred by conscience or respect for the international covenants that govern the status of refugees and provide for their protection. To our surprise, this crime was met with indifference from the international community, which did nothing to ensure the return of those children to their families. From this rostrum we call upon all international agencies, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross to condemn this crime in the strongest possible terms and to work effectively and decisively to put an end to the plight of those children and to work to reunite them with their families in the Sudan as soon as is practicable.

The relationship of the Sudan with the United Nations has continued to exist on a basis of constructive cooperation. Within the scope of such cooperation, productive developmental schemes and child-care projects have been set up, in addition to the humanitarian operations under the auspices of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and the appointment of a special envoy who played an effective role in coordinating humanitarian efforts. The United Nations also successfully raised from the donor community resources equivalent to 60 per cent of the required finances of Operation Life Line for 1994.

While we recall such positive achievements, we must also refer to certain negative aspects that accompanied that cooperation. In the field of relief distribution under Operation Life Line, statistics have confirmed that the greater portion of relief is directed to the rebel-held areas, which represent less than 10 per cent of the area of Southern Sudan, a situation which must be rectified. Also, while we appreciate the valuable role of non-governmental organizations working in the humanitarian field, it is relevant to underline the negative activities of some of them, which go so far as to violate the national sovereignty of Sudan, and provide support to the rebels, thus prolonging the war and adding to the suffering and distress of our people.

As we look forward to the forthcoming celebrations of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we must recall that its inception was a product of a human awakening, following two destructive world wars that caused devastation to mankind and the environment, and crippled the progress of humanity. At a time when the use of military power was the sole means to expand political and economic influence, the establishment of the

Organization represented a hope for humanity to overcome its destructive tendencies, which were spurred by the possession of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, and to strive for the horizons of peace and development.

It was saddening that the human awakening which culminated in the inception of the Organization was followed by a Cold War that continued until the 1990s. As a result, huge resources were drained away instead of being invested in the areas of peace and development. It is also saddening that the mentality of the Cold War still prevails in what is conceived as a clash of civilizations. It has been wrongly believed that the disappearance of one enemy must be followed by the creation of a new one in an attempt to keep the cycle of war and conflict going. While the world witnesses the emergence of new States and the decline of apartheid, some are still trapped in that erroneous conception, which has given rise to various regional tensions, such as those in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. Racial discrimination and xenophobia have increased in a number of western countries; the exodus of refugees and the flow of displaced persons continues.

In the economic arena, and despite the world's drive towards a free-market economy we have nevertheless witnessed a deterioration in economic and social infrastructures, especially in the developing countries. This deterioration is a direct result of the unfair practices and criteria that still plague international economic relations. Contributions by wealthier States and international financial institutions to assist developing countries have severely decreased; selective non-economic conditions are often imposed in dealing with the developing countries. Moreover, economic performance is no longer the criterion that is taken into account. Political considerations have become the sole basis of cooperation with the lending States and institutions.

The problems of indebtedness and debt servicing continue to represent a huge burden on debtor States and in particular, the least developed countries. The debt problem remains unresolved because the creditors insist on imposing conditions that related more to the political stances of the debtor States and therefore, selectivity was resorted to in resolving the debt problem. We call upon this august body to adopt the resolutions and recommendations of the Non-Aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting held last August in Jakarta, Indonesia, on resolving the debt problems of developing countries. The partial remission of debts is the appropriate starting point to resolve the debt problem, instead of the re-scheduling process, which has already contributed to multiplying the amount of debt service in excess of the principal.

The objective of establishing regional economic groupings is to contribute to the creation of a free flow of trade, investments and technology across national borders and the integrated trading groups. The scale of development in all countries, especially the developing countries, must be stepped up and the politics of protectionism practised by the major Powers vis-à-vis developing countries for political reasons must end.

When we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we hope that the Organization will attain tangible achievements in eliminating the political, economic, social and humanitarian distortions that influence the international arena. Such achievements can be attained only by translating the principles and objectives of the Charter into real terms that reflect the values of justice, equality, and full participation by all Member States in creating a better future.

In order to achieve such goals, the democratization of the United Nations and all its organs must be accomplished. According to the Charter, the General Assembly has a role to play on an equal footing with the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, as well as in supervising the performance of other organs of the Organization.

Just as we fully support the call for increasing the membership of the Security Council to ensure the equitable representation of all geographic and political groups in the Council, we also call for a reconsideration of geographical representation by allowing Africa, Asia and Latin America more opportunities to have permanent seats on the Council. We also call for the complete abolition of the veto power, as it contradicts all the principles of democracy and maintains the hegemony of the minority.

Furthermore, we note a lack of transparency in the functioning of the Security Council, and believe that most Member States are often unable to follow its work. While we appreciate the efforts made to improve the performance of the Council, its persistent practice of holding intensive informal consultations marginalizes the role of the majority of Member States in the maintenance of international peace and security. Accordingly, rules of procedure regulating the Council's procedures must be established to provide for a fair and objective guarantee of the existence of the required transparency.

As regards the Council's resolutions, it is regrettable that the practice of double standards and selectivity, as reflected in its resolutions and their implementation, has greatly affected its credibility, a problem which we hope will be resolved.

The Economic and Social Council, as a guardian of economic and social rights should take more interest in maintaining the right balance between political and economic rights in its resolutions and decisions, which have become more inclined towards political rights in spite of the Vienna Declaration, which considered the right to development a basic human right.

The peace process has already started in the Middle East. In order for that process to reach the desired goals, the peace that is hoped for in the regional should be based on the pillars of justice and equality and the attainment by the Palestinian people of all their rights and the withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. The withdrawal from the Syrian Golan Heights and southern Lebanon should be carried out in full implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 (1978). The withdrawal from Jerusalem and all the other occupied Arab territories will remain critical in determining the real Israeli intention to establish a just and lasting peace.

The recent conflict in the sisterly state of Yemen ended with the victory of constitutional legality, which preserved the unity of Yemen. This incident should lead us to stress the need to refrain from intervention in the internal affairs of other States that might find themselves in similar circumstances.

With regard to Somalia, which faces enormous hurdles and internecine killings, we call upon all parties to heed the voice of reason and to work together for the attainment of a national reconciliation that would enable Somalia to resume the role destined for it at the regional and international levels.

We must also pause here to consider the suffering of the Iraqi people, which is worsening as a result of the embargo imposed on it even though it has been admitted that Iraq has shown full cooperation in implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions. We call for the lifting of the sanctions imposed on Iraq as soon as possible and we urge the members of the Security Council to renew their consideration of this issue.

As regards the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, we are surprised by the continuation of sanctions in spite of all the practical proposals made by the Jamahiriya, through the League of Arab states, in order to finalize its dispute with some Western countries over the Lockerbie incident in a reasonable manner. The aforementioned treatment of Libya lacks any legal and humanitarian justification.

The Bosnian peoples' tragedy continues to be a shameful blot the face of humanity. Factors of religious bias have greatly contributed to the creation and escalation of the Bosnian tragedy.

As for the Security Council, it has pursued a clear policy of double standards in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovena. Not only did the Security Council reward the aggressors by granting them territories they do not own, but it has deprived the Bosnians of their legitimate right to self-defence as enshrined in the United Nations Charter, through an arms-embargo resolution. Bosnia and Herzegovena did not declare an intention to acquire the lands of others, but only wanted to defend itself and its people against aggression.

As I conclude my statement, I should like to pose questions which, I believe, that are relevant to our preparations for celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the International Decade of Tolerance. Are we prepared to abandon the unilateral approach to the tackling of problems of international relations? Are we ready to recognize now that this world accommodates us as distinct and diverse peoples and civilizations coexisting with one another?

It is our opinion that fostering regional and international peace and security does not mean the omission of the underlying causes of tension. Equally, comprehensive development does not mean the entrenchment of the unfair economic and technological practices existing in today's world. Furthermore, democracy in our opinion does not mean the imposition of the western model of democracy alone and omission of other peoples' practices and civilizations in the field of governance and systems of government. Moreover, universality of sovereignty does not mean disregard for the national and geographic sovereignty of States. Also, the universality of human rights, which enjoys our respect and commitment, does not necessarily mean cancellation of the religious beliefs of peoples and their moral values. In brief, the principles and values adopted by any one society are not necessarily or definitely fit for application by all other societies. By applying such a unilateral perspective, we will deprive civilization of the benefits of diversity and from its productive legacy and

we will as such deprive peoples of their right to opt for the political models and social conduct that are more compatible with their aspirations. Otherwise, we would only compound a new phase of undesired cultural conflicts and tensions.

Let us turn a new leaf in international relations that would be founded on the rejection of conflict and confrontation, based on the principles of mutual respect and non-interference in the affairs of others, without extremism, bias or radicalism.

In conclusion, let our deeds speak louder than our words in building up the tolerance with which we prepare to commence the international decade, and let us extend this it to embrace all aspects of politics, thought, economics, culture, and religion.

The President *(interpretation from French):* The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, His Excellency Mr. Ali-Akbar Velayati, on whom I now call.

Mr. Velayati (Islamic Republic of Iran) *(spoke in Farsi; English text furnished by the delegation):* May I at the outset congratulate Mr. Amara Essy on his well-deserved election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Allow me to emphasize my delegation's complete readiness to cooperate with him and other delegations during this session. I also wish to express my satisfaction at the presence of the delegation of the democratic Government of South Africa at this session.

On the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, this session of the General Assembly presents us with the opportunity to envisage a better world based on the principles of the Charter and the shared values and aspirations of its members. The only path to the achievement of this vital goal is the examination of past performance, a sober analysis of present circumstances and the formulation of a renewed vision of the future of international relations in accordance with the Charter.

In the past 50 years the United Nations has succeeded in some areas, including decolonization. Yet the rivalries between the two super-Powers did not allow the Organization to accomplish its mission in full. In the area of disarmament, the United Nations was not able to play a significant role, and substantive negotiations were conducted outside the United Nations system. By the same token, the role played by the Organization in economic development was heavily influenced by similar rivalries between East and West, resulting in economic relations devoid of justice and parity. In addition, the cold war was a factor in shaping the structural make-up of the Organization, and so the United Nations was deprived of the opportunity to be a true agent of change.

During the past 50 years of its existence the United Nations has had its share of challenges. Yet never before has the Organization faced such a historic and serious challenge in self-renewal as it does at present, when we have reached a crossroads in the history of international relations. Naturally, to meet the challenge of today's numerous rapid changes, the Organization must rid itself of the very constraints imposed upon it by the era of rivalry between the super-Powers.

But, alas, a few self-proclaimed victors of the cold war feel entitled to dictate the new criteria that determine international relations and guide the United Nations and, more specifically, the Security Council, arrogating to themselves the right to impose their own vision and self-serving interpretations on the rest of humanity. The transformation of the Security Council into an instrument for justification or enforcement of policies of a number of permanent members is not at all compatible with the spirit of the Charter and contradicts the very letter of Article 24, according to which the Council acts on behalf of the entire membership of the Organization. Contrary to the assumptions of a few, the Security Council is no one's private domain and should not be abused to revive the gunboat diplomacy of some Powers. A body charged with the grave responsibility of maintaining international peace and security must not be influenced and manipulated by those Powers that have historically sought to serve their own self-interest at the expense of international peace.

The failure of the Security Council to adopt a balanced approach in dealing with various crises and its persistent application of double standards, due to manipulation by some permanent members, have in effect prevented the Council from discharging its primary responsibility in accordance with the Charter. The most vivid illustration has been the silence of the Security Council and its failure to adopt resolute measures in the face of repeated acts of aggression committed by Israel against the people of Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria. How can the Security Council supporters of the regime occupying Palestine allow this expansionist regime to continue its aggression against neighbours, while repeated resolutions of the Council demand an end to occupation? What motives underlie the silence of the Security Council

in the face of overt official terrorist acts by Israel in the occupied territories and in South Lebanon? The massacre of Muslims in the Al-Khalil Mosque, the bombing of residential areas in South Lebanon, the kidnapping of Lebanese citizens, and other such incidents portray the bitter reality that Israel has come to believe that, with the support of a number of powerful States, it can continue such behaviour with impunity.

Israel's real and ultimate objective has been to continue its occupation. Today, under the disguise of the peace process, this very policy is being pursued through the repression of Muslims and all opponents of the illegal and aggressive Israeli occupation. Therefore, in our view, the current process lacks realism, fails to adhere to universal principles and therefore will not lead to real peace. The comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian issue lies in the full realization of all the rights of the people of Palestine, including the return of all Palestinian refugees to their own land, enabling them to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, and the liberation of all occupied territories.

The unprincipled approach of the Security Council *vis-à-vis* different crises and aggressions is also demonstrated by its questionable handling of the aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For more than two and a half years, the defenceless Muslims of Bosnia have been resisting foreign aggression, "ethnic cleansing", massacre and the gradual annihilation of their nation. Despite the adoption of countless resolutions and statements, and in fact because of the lack of political will to deal with the roots of the crisis, the Security Council has not only failed to implement its own resolutions, but in fact has empowered the aggressors to continue their atrocities and has prevented a State Member of the United Nations from exercising its inherent right of self-defence through its resistance to the appeal of the international community to lift the unjustifiable arms embargo against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

From the very beginning of the crisis, the Government of Bosnia has participated in all negotiations in good faith, even though most of the peace plans proposed by mediators have been unjust. The Government of Bosnia has amply demonstrated its sincere desire for peace. On the other hand, the aggressors and their supporters have, through a policy of procrastination, created an impasse in the negotiations by mocking all the decisions of the Council and all proposals for peace. However, regrettably and in spite of previous commitments, no measure to encourage compliance and punish intransigence and non-compliance has been adopted by the Council. It was a source of deep anguish and astonishment to witness a few days ago the Security Council prematurely rushing to reward Serbia for nothing more than a tactical move, while months after the acceptance of the latest peace plan by the Government of Bosnia and its rejection by the Serbs, no decision has been made to fulfil the commitment of the five-nation Contact Group, including the lifting of the unjustified arms embargo against Bosnia.

In their recent gathering in Islamabad, Islamic countries expressed their determination to contribute individually and collectively to the legitimate defence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At this juncture, a decisive majority among United Nations Member States are of the view that the implementation of the arms embargo against Bosnia is illegal. Many of these countries, in tandem with public opinion, consider any further waiting for a final pronouncement by the Council as unjustifiable in the present circumstances. Thus, we believe that in the interest of its own credibility, the Council must take action without further ado and show its respect for the views of an undisputed majority within the international community.

These examples and the debates of the past year on restructuring the General Assembly and the Security Council have clearly shown that the procedures and methodology of the Security Council must be re-evaluated and changed in order to enable it to address transparently and in a just and serious manner issues affecting international peace and security. Many also agree that the authority of the General Assembly in attending to matters of peace and security, as asserted by the Charter, and the need for greater accountability of the Security Council to the Assembly must be translated from mere words into reality. The Council must scrupulously fulfil its obligations towards the membership of the Organization at large, on whose behalf the Council operates.

The United Nations will be able to deal with world issues effectively only when and if all its Members are allowed to participate equally in decision-making. Most contemporary international developments cannot be fully appreciated if looked at in the perspective of 50 years ago. If we are sincere in our belief that the world is so changed that we must eliminate all references to "enemy States" from the Charter, then why not also acknowledge that there is no further justification for holding on to privileges granted to the war victors of that time?

Another fundamental issue which must be carefully considered in our assessment of the first 50 years of the United Nations activities pertains to the role of the United Nations in all matters concerning disarmament, including multilateral efforts to effect total, comprehensive and non-discriminatory disarmament in the world. Today, one of the main preoccupations of the international community is the future of arms control, particularly that of weapons of mass destruction, which have no justification in the post-cold-war era. The international community must identify the hazards attached to stockpiling and horizontal and vertical proliferation of these weapons. It must then move to establish comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory international treaties to ensure the elimination and destruction of these weapons in the shortest possible time.

Shortly after the suspension of the current session, States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons will gather to review the effectiveness of this Treaty over the past 25 years and to decide upon the extent and conditions of its renewal. To reach a rational and practical decision, one must answer the question whether the international community is prepared to accept, as it has done for the past 25 years, that the nuclear Powers, on the one hand, be for ever equipped with these weapons of destruction and that, on the other, the majority of the signatories to the non-proliferation Treaty remain deprived of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy.

Iran was one of the first signatories to this Treaty and has remained faithfully committed to it. But at the same time, it is one of the many developing countries deprived of the possibilities of progress and development offered by the peaceful use of nuclear energy as recognized in the Treaty. We believe that the unconditional and indefinite renewal of the non-proliferation Treaty will only lead to the possession of these destructive and anti-human weapons by a handful of nuclear Powers and that the rest of the international community will be forced to live in fear in the dark shadow of these weapons. The founding of a new world order on the encouragement and institutionalization of discriminatory and vague norms, including the conferring of permanent status such treaties and the proliferation of discriminatory, selective and non-universal regimes such as the Australia Group or the London Club, does not augur well for the future of the international community and the emerging world order.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a victim of weapons of mass destruction, has under no circumstances attempted, nor will it ever attempt, to develop or possess these anti-human weapons. It thus attaches great value to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons despite that instrument's many inherent shortcomings. However, in our view a limited renewal of the Treaty can serve the objective of nuclear disarmament only if careful attention is paid to the following considerations: first, nuclear Powers should abandon the doctrine of nuclear deterrence and commit themselves to a target date for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons; secondly, the comprehensive test-ban treaty should be finalized and unconditionally signed; thirdly, the production, development, stockpiling of and trade in all fissile materials for nuclear-weapons purposes must be permanently banned; fourthly, the security of non-nuclear States must be guaranteed against the threat of the use of these weapons by others, which will be possible through an effective international treaty; and, lastly, access by Governments to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes should be guaranteed.

The future of the nuclear-proliferation Treaty also requires serious consideration of the critical situation in the Middle East and the nuclear threat posed by Israel. Israel's nuclear programme has exacerbated the arms race in the region and has forced others within the area to turn to more advanced conventional weaponry. Some States in the region have made their accession to a number of disarmament treaties conditional upon Israel's acceptance of international regimes established to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Israel's refusal to do so, which regrettably enjoys the support of a number of developed nuclear-weapon States, will affect the perspective of States in the Middle East on the future of the non-proliferation Treaty after 1995.

In addition to Israel's continuous threats, interference by foreign Governments in the affairs of regional States has led to negative perceptions and perspectives within the region that have impeded serious dialogue and consideration of constructive suggestions for creating peace stability and security in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which possesses the longest shoreline along the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, has been well aware of its role and responsibilities in promoting and maintaining peace and security in the area and has spared no effort in this regard. Today, the largest portion of Iran's national budget is devoted to economic and social development and to reconstruction. Many of our military industries have been transformed into non-military units. Despite the volatile nature of our

region and our own bitter experience as a victim of aggression, only an average of 1.6 per cent of Iran's gross domestic product is allocated to national defence, while some neighbouring countries continue their purchase of huge stockpiles of weapons.

We firmly believe in the imperative of developing regional security arrangements that ensure the participation of all Persian Gulf countries. Such arrangements would diminish the arms race and guarantee the free flow of oil and economic development and prosperity in the area. The religious, cultural, historical and commercial commonalities of the countries of the region make it incumbent upon us to effect and expand trust and cooperation through bilateral and multilateral initiatives. We propose here the creation of a forum, with the participation of the Persian Gulf countries, to review and develop confidence-building measures compatible with the requirements of the region. The maintenance of security in the Persian Gulf is the responsibility of the countries surrounding this strategic waterway. Foreign Governments, which have often been the source of instability and insecurity in the region, should support collective regional initiatives for cooperation and refrain from sowing discord and tension and from other divisive policies to which they have historically resorted in order to preserve their interests and justify their presence.

The efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to reduce tension in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kashmir and Karabakh and its consistent affirmation of the principle of respect for internationally recognized borders, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of others are in line with its overall policy geared toward the maintenance and strengthening of stability, security and economic development in the region.

Our policy concerning Afghanistan has focused on efforts to prevent war and fratricide and on attempts to persuade warring factions to negotiate and reach understanding. In attaining these objectives we have had comprehensive and constructive cooperation with the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Meanwhile, we have continued our humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and now act as host to about 1.5 million Afghan refugees remaining in our country.

In efforts to settle the crisis in Tajikistan, while cooperating with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and organizing the second round of inter-Tajik talks in Tehran, we have continued our high-level contacts with the warring parties and others concerned. Last week, following an extensive mediation effort by Iran, it was possible to arrange serious meetings and negotiation in Tehran between the two parties, represented at the highest level. As a result, an agreement to halt hostilities and to release prisoners and war captives was signed by both sides in Tehran in the presence of representatives of the Secretary-General and the Russian Federation.

In all these peace-making efforts we have welcomed consultation and cooperation with all interested States and international organizations to contain these crises and prevent or mitigate their disastrous humanitarian consequences.

In Central Asia and the Caucasus, expansion and strengthening of relations in all spheres, particularly those of economic and cultural cooperation with neighbouring countries, are being vigorously pursued to facilitate and ensure sustainable development in the region, build an atmosphere of mutual understanding and consolidate stability. As a founding member of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Islamic Republic of Iran is actively engaged in promoting free trade and joint ventures among the States members of this organization. Iran is hopeful that ECO's observer status at the United Nations attained last year will help enhance collaboration between ECO and various United Nations organs and agencies.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has also endeavoured to establish a Caspian Sea cooperation council that would ensure and monitor environmental protection and proper utilization of its resources by littoral States. These regional efforts have laid the groundwork for multilateral cooperation between Iran, Central Asian States and industrialized countries.

Another major problem in the United Nations during the past decades has been the selective recourse to - and, indeed, manipulation and exploitation of - human concerns and anxieties to meet questionable political agendas. In this body a minority, whose past records are far from impeccable, have arrogated to themselves such concepts as human rights and democracy and systematically used them as instruments of political pressure without any basis in reality or any justification. Such an approach makes human rights subservient to political interest and is designed and is being followed solely to further political ambitions and impose the values of a specific group over the historical, political, economic, social, religious, and cultural values of others.

At the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna and the recent International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, the failed attempts of a minority discontented with divine moral values to impose their ideas and ways on the religious majority illustrated the undisputed imperative for developing a clear and precise appreciation of and respect for divine teachings and values and religious beliefs. These two Conferences showed that a good number of States, particularly Islamic countries, cherish their religious values enough to attribute more priority to defending their divine values and Islamic teachings, which guarantee the moral and material health of our societies, than to political considerations; they resisted, in a united front, any attempt to disregard, undermine or desecrate these values.

For Muslims, the remarks made by the leader of the Norwegian delegation at the Cairo Conference were especially intolerable, insulting and simply erroneous. We repeat our call to the Norwegian authorities to take the necessary remedial measures, to refrain from repeating such statements manifesting religious intolerance and to begin to recognize and respect the rights of the majority of humanity, who believe in divine religions.

By the same token, the dangerous phenomenon of lack of respect and tolerance for the values and beliefs of others is, regrettably, gaining momentum in Western countries against Muslim communities. This has resulted in the violation of their most fundamental human rights and in their being forcibly deprived of their basic right to maintain and practise the values and teachings of Islam. We therefore believe that greater efforts should be made to foster and promote understanding of, and respect for, the diverse values of different peoples and nations through, *inter alia*, constructive dialogue and the implementation of a strengthened system of consultation.

A similar problem is manifested in the approach of the international community *vis-à-vis* the threat of international terrorism in all its forms. Political considerations and reluctance to prevent terrorist activities by groups whose positions correspond with the policies of certain hegemonic Powers have indisputably impeded international efforts with a view to eradicating international terrorism and are thus unjustifiable. How can the supporters of the overt official terrorism of Israel declare themselves champions of the struggle against terrorism and yet have the audacity arbitrarily to accuse others of supporting terrorism? Why do these countries prevent any meaningful action against the Zionist terrorist atrocities in the Ibrahimi mosque in Al-Khalil? How do they remain totally indifferent to, and indeed acquiesce in, the recent terrorist explosion that killed and wounded many innocent pilgrims in the holiest shrine in our country? In our view, the only way to combat terrorism is through a comprehensive, uniform and across-the-board campaign. We need to work together at the international level to eliminate this anti-human phenomenon in all corners of the world, regardless of the race, religion, ideology or political affiliations of the victims or of the culprits.

Another important challenge facing the United Nations is the need for political realism and serious consideration of current and future socio-economic circumstances and their direct correlation with social stability and peace. Increasing social complications are directly linked to chronic economic conditions and the ever-worsening inequitable international economic relations at the expense of developing countries. Unless this correlation is acknowledged realistically and addressed responsibly in the decisions of international forums, and unless effective remedial measures are implemented with the necessary international support and cooperation, further exacerbation of international economic and social crises will continue to pose a grave and alarming threat to us all. It is thus imperative to utilize every opportunity to translate understandings into action-oriented programmes in order to bring about the needed improvement in the world social situation on the eve of the twenty-first century.

Yet one must not forget that what prevents today's United Nations from carrying out its economic and developmental responsibilities is not the absence of legislation or plans of action. Indeed, the main obstacle to the implementation of significant existing decisions is the glaring absence of political will and financial and technical resources. Therefore, the Agenda for Development should envisage explicit and practical mechanisms for the effective and expeditious implementation of these international agreements.

The experience of the past five decades has demonstrated that because of the primacy of political considerations over humanitarian values and the principles of the United Nations Charter, it has not been possible to utilize properly the varied and unique potential of the Organization as a formidable instrument for enhancing international cooperation, strengthening understanding and trust, preventing and resolving crises and upheavals, facilitating economic development, battling social and international ills such as terrorism and drugs, reinforcing respect for the exalted dignity, worth

and rights of human beings, and ensuring the common good.

Preparations and planning for the second half-century of the existence of the United Nations should be conducted in full cognizance of this shortcoming, and with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the Organization in carrying out those agreed tasks that are of interest and importance to the international community in its entirety. Old methods that have lost their credibility must be abandoned. New ways that are compatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter while corresponding to the changing international environment must be developed. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its full readiness to offer unreserved cooperation to Mr. Amara-Essy and to other delegations to achieve these goals.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola, His Excellency Mr. Venancio de Moura.

Mr. de Moura (Angola) *(spoke in Portuguese; English text furnished by the delegation):* Please allow me to begin by congratulating Mr. Amara-Essy, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Angola, on my own behalf and on behalf of my delegation, on his election to the presidency of this forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly. We are fully convinced that his diplomatic experience and dedication to the noble ideals of our Organization will ensure the success of the Assembly's proceedings at this session. I wish to assure him of my delegation's full cooperation.

I should also like to express our appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally, for his proven dedication and skill in conducting the activities of the Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

I also wish to express the profound gratitude of the people and Government of the Republic of Angola to the Secretary-General for his skill, energy and tenacity, and for all his efforts in the search for solutions to the innumerable and serious problems afflicting the peoples of our planet.

The history we are witnessing today clearly shows a flagrant betrayal of many peoples' expectations of a better world following the end of the cold war. We had all hoped for, and anticipated, life in a better world of peace and prosperity. Instead, we are witnessing the proliferation of internal conflicts, with such tragic consequences, and we see no visible signs of any immediate satisfactory and lasting solutions, despite the efforts of this Organization.

With the end of the cold war and ideological confrontation, the African continent has witnessed during the past five years a vast expansion of democracy, which has contributed to the revival of hope for the prosperity and well-being of the African peoples, still suffering the economic backwardness bequeathed by colonialism.

However, Africa continues to be the continent most affected by the proliferation of war and political instability. It is sufficient to mention as examples the conflicts in Rwanda, Somalia, Liberia, Burundi and my own country.

Similar problems are occurring in many other parts of the world, which indicates the need for an immediate intensification of efforts by the international community, and in particular for increased participation by the United Nations, to find a negotiated, just and acceptable formula to protect the legitimate interests of peoples.

The United Nations must define universal guidelines to prevent the application of differing criteria to the solution of various conflicts. In other words, in order to maintain the credibility of our Organization, all crises and conflicts must be given fair and equal treatment. This underlines the urgent need to restructure United Nations procedures in order to make the existing mechanisms for the prevention and management of conflicts compatible with the realities of our time.

With respect to human rights, the United Nations should continue to play an active role in order to prevent their continuing to be jeopardized. The recent establishment of the post of High Commissioner for human rights by the General Assembly was an important step forward in this sense.

The Republic of Angola reaffirms that human rights and fundamental freedoms are universal, and that their promotion and protection should be ensured on the basis of equality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity. The human rights issue cannot and should not be used as a political weapon or a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of States.

Angola follows with interest and satisfaction the positive developments taking place in some regions of the world, where solutions are being found to conflicts that had seemed endless. In the Middle East, for example, the determination of the Palestinian people and the political courage of the present Government of Israel have contributed to the climate of reduced tension that led

to the historic agreement, signed in Washington, for the autonomy of Gaza and Jericho - territories illegally occupied in the past.

We appeal to the international community to make every effort to ensure strict compliance with the agreement, and success for it, by providing all possible help to the Palestinian people for the reconstruction and socio-economic development of the embryonic Palestinian State.

It would not be immoderate to once again hail the courage and determination demonstrated by President Yasser Arafat and by Mr. Shimon Peres.

We encourage the Government of Israel to continue the contacts already initiated with the countries of the region with a view to achieving peace and harmony in the area.

In southern Africa, we laud the courage and determination of the people of South Africa, which led to the fall of the inhuman and anachronistic apartheid regime. Today we rejoice to see the people of South Africa free at last. We again greet the new South Africa, led by President Mandela, this different South Africa, which emerged from a democratic election, whose results were accepted by all the political forces in the country.

We warmly congratulate the new South African authorities and welcome them to our Organization. We also pay tribute to the peoples of southern Africa, who made so many sacrifices before toppling the dreadful apartheid regime.

Angola, which was the main victim of innumerable attacks, suffering enormous loss of human life and destruction of social and economic infrastructures, because of the support we gave to the brotherly people of South Africa, has reason to ask here and now whether the resolutions of this Assembly and of the Security Council regarding compensation to my country will now be implemented.

In Mozambique, we welcome and encourage the Government's commitment to organize democratic elections, and we urge RENAMO and other political forces to respond with an equal commitment to the success of the process, leading to lasting peace in that country. However, the United Nations, in particular, and the international community, in general, have an important role to play in ensuring the attainment of the main objectives: peace, democracy and prosperity.

In Liberia, we are encouraged by the positive developments and by the dialogue that is taking place between the parties involved. Angola encourages the continuation of such dialogue and urges the parties to truly commit themselves to the search for a lasting peace.

With regard to Western Sahara, Angola urges the parties involved to apply the United Nations peace plan strictly and to adhere scrupulously to the mechanisms established for that purpose, which have the full support of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and we encourage the parties to enter into direct dialogue to facilitate progress.

In Rwanda, the easing of political and military upheavals notwithstanding, a precarious socio-humanitarian situation prevails. Angola expresses its solidarity with the brotherly people of Rwanda. We consider that the international community should continue to play an important role in solving the crisis in Rwanda and in maintaining the peace and tranquillity of its peoples.

In Somalia, in spite of the commitment demonstrated by the international community, we do not foresee an end to the armed conflict in the near future, because of the lack of consensus between the parties involved. Angola considers that our Organization should continue to assume its responsibility in the maintenance of world peace and security, which are threatened in that part of Africa, and we appeal to the common sense of the parties to cooperate with the United Nations in the efforts to re-establish peace in that country.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in spite of the enormous efforts by the international community to restore peace, profound differences still remain, and this contributes to the continuation of the conflict. We therefore urge the parties and the international community to continue their efforts to find a lasting solution that is acceptable to the parties involved. Finally, we salute the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for its efforts to that end.

With regard to the Korean peninsula, Angola encourages the efforts towards reunification and salutes the positive signs registered in the dialogue between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America.

Angola is following with concern the situation in East Timor. The international community has witnessed

the serious and persistent violations of human-rights to which the suffering people of East Timor have been subjected. Angola considers that there is a fundamental problem to be resolved first. Here, I refer to decolonization and to respect for the rights of the peoples of this territory - mainly, their right to self-determination. We therefore urge the Government of Indonesia to recognize the legitimate right of the people of East Timor to self-determination and independence and to cooperate with Portugal, as the administering Power, and with the United Nations towards fulfilment of the wishes of the Maubere people.

The current situation in Cuba, following the tightening of the economic embargo, should be one of the main concerns at this session of the General Assembly, as its direct victims are the populations of island.

The General Assembly's adoption of resolutions 47/19 and 48/16 clearly demonstrates that the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed against Cuba is contrary to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. For this reason, and in particular because of the extraterritorial application of that unilateral measure, Angola condemns it.

As we add our voice to those of all who seek an end to the embargo imposed against Cuba we are convinced that only through dialogue - never by adopting drastic and inhuman measures such as I have mentioned - can disputes be resolved. We therefore encourage the continuance of dialogue between the two countries towards the resolution of their differences within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations.

The international strategy for development for the years 1991-2000, which was adopted in December 1991, brought hope to the international community, which has regarded the effective implementation of this new strategy as the solution to the socio-economic problems of our planet. Today, three years having elapsed, a certain scepticism is shaking our initial convictions.

The Republic of Angola considers that the role played by the international economic institutions - bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Trade Organization and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade - is of vital importance. In the fight against trade barriers, these bodies create enormous opportunities for developing countries to participate in the development of the world market. The heavy and painful burden of external debt dating back to 1982 leads us to believe that the efforts of all are necessary if we are to find medium- and long-term solutions.

Equally, special attention must be given to the issues of sustainable development. This necessarily implies implementation of the objectives of the Rio summit and the honouring of commitments assumed thereafter by the industrialized countries.

The data included in the reports presented to the Cairo Conference on Population and Development demonstrate that the social situation throughout the world is assuming almost alarming proportions. The fact that the world's population is now 5.5 billion and that the majority of these people live in absolute poverty convinces us of the urgent need to adopt, during the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development, a concerted plan of action calling for measures to counter the increasing deterioration in their social condition. We therefore reiterate our firm belief in the legitimacy of the goals set out in the document entitled "African Common Position on Human and Social Development in Africa".

Having made a few comments on the main problems that affect all of us in one way or another, I should like to make a brief reference to the situation in my country.

Representatives will probably recall that, following UNITA's rejection of the results of the democratic elections in 1992, which the international community monitored and judged to have been free and fair, UNITA resorted to war, with the objective of taking power by force of arms, contrary to the spirit of the Bicesse Accord, of which this Organization is a signatory and which served as the basis for the electoral process.

The situation created by the resumption of war rapidly degenerated into a real catastrophe, jeopardizing the country's territorial integrity and forcing the legitimate government to take defensive measures to prevent the realization of UNITA's intentions.

In spite all the efforts of the Angolan Government and of the international community, and as a result of this war, imposed on the people of Angola by the militaristic wing of Mr. Savimbi's UNITA, Angola faces a rather sombre future - one dangerously similar to those of the countries that I have already mentioned.

The present situation in my country is characterized by the extreme poverty of the people, who, having fled

the war zones in order to save their lives, have become refugees in their own land.

In Angola there are currently 3.75 million displaced persons, more than 500,000 mutilated people and thousands of orphaned children and abandoned elderly folk. In addition, almost of the country's all economic infrastructures have been destroyed. In some areas controlled by the Government, people and goods cannot always circulate freely, owing to mines and to the acts of terrorism and banditry perpetrated by UNITA's military wing.

The difficult situation that I have just described must continue to command the attention of the international community if the people and the legitimate Government are to be helped to re-establish peace throughout the country.

As those present in this Hall know, on 15 November last, following the failure of our attempts to establish a dialogue, from Namibia to Addis Ababa and Abidjan, the Government of Angola initiated the negotiations of Lusaka. These were mediated by the United Nations and were observed by Portugal, Russia and the United States of America, whose endeavour has contributed to the consensus in the negotiators' position.

It is important that we should once again express our sincere gratitude to the Government of His Excellency President Chiluba for his generosity and patience in receiving the Angolan people in his country and for his positive action, albeit discreet and unofficial. We also reiterate our appreciation of the important role played by the troika of observers - Portugal, Russia and the United States of America - and for the committed way in which the Secretary-General's special representative, Mr. Alioune Beye, has conducted the negotiations in Lusaka. Mr. Beye's knowledge of the Angolan situation is our guarantee of a rapid conclusion to the talks. The people of Angola and the international community expressed their satisfaction at the fact that UNITA has finally accepted the mediators' package of proposals, for this constitutes an important step towards peace and national reconciliation.

It is none the less true that UNITA accepted this package of proposals by the mediators only because of pressure from the international community and, first and foremost, from the Security Council through its numerous resolutions, in particular resolutions 864 (1993) and 932 (1994), which advocated the imposition of sanctions against UNITA if its leadership did not demonstrate good faith about the conclusion of an agreement; and, also because on the military front there had been a clear reversal of the situation. Today the Government already controls more than 75 per cent of the territory and 90 per cent of the population.

We are convinced that if this pressure is maintained UNITA, which knows only the language of the force of weapons, might engage in a constructive and honest dialogue. In this context we once again urge the international community to continue exercising its various forms of pressure on UNITA's militaristic wing so that an agreement is reached in Lusaka to put a definitive end to the war and to restore peace and harmony among the Angolan people.

We are not aiming at a military victory. We want an agreement that can bring lasting peace and pave the way to national reconciliation. Our insistence on pressure is based on our desire that the relative progress made in Lusaka be irreversible, as it is only a step along the difficult path to peace and its consolidation, to the promotion of the country's unity and national reconciliation, and to the defence of legality and democracy.

Therefore, the international community, and the Security Council in particular, must be prepared to act immediately as soon as an agreement is reached in Lusaka in order to avoid any pretexts for non-compliance.

There must not be a substantial interval between the signing of the agreement in Lusaka and the re-establishment of the cease-fire, on the one hand, and the beginning of the implementation of the Lusaka agreement, or understandings on the other; this will avoid violations. In this context it is necessary to anticipate the sending of the component of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) immediately after the signing of the agreement.

Please allow me to reiterate before this Assembly that it is the firm commitment of the Government of the Republic of Angola not to spare any effort in the search for a negotiated solution to the crisis in Angola and that it is not our intention to destroy UNITA militarily. Contrary to information which has been circulated recently accusing the Government of launching a military offensive against UNITA, we have to say that the truth is completely different. The Government is engaged in stopping the UNITA military offensive, with the aim of halting the kind of events that occurred before the signing

of the Bicesse Accords, in order to ensure that a military advantage not be obtained while the Lusaka Accord was being signed. We should not enable UNITA to obstruct the full implementation of the Accord. We want UNITA to become a political party, to be prepared to live in democracy and to respect the existing constitution, which is the result of a difficult national consensus which UNITA itself joined in and which it amended before it was approved by the Parliament.

Finally, we would like to send a strong appeal to the international community to increase humanitarian assistance to the needy people. The Government's scarce resources are insufficient to meet the dramatic socio-humanitarian situation of the people being rescued from the captivity of UNITA.

Members have had the opportunity to see on television the real situation in Kuito and elsewhere. The Government of Angola has always been committed to delivering humanitarian assistance to all the needy regardless of where they may be, and requests that pressure be exerted on UNITA not to hamper the efforts to distribute relief supplies to the population and the work of non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies which with great sacrifice are involved in humanitarian assistance to Angola.

I reiterate our best wishes for the success of this forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 8.35 p.m.